



e-WESTWIND



Close Encounters of the WORST Kind – an ASG29 wing spar embedded in the nose of a jet. Miraculously, everyone survived (this time) See features for reports and commentary.

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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Pacific Soaring Council, Inc, a non-profit, 501(c)3 corporation, is to initiate, sponsor, promote and carry out plans, policies and activities that will further the education and development of soaring pilots.

Specifically, activities will promote and teach the safety of flight; meteorology; training in the physiology of flight, and the skills of cross country and high altitude soaring. Other activities will be directed towards the development of competition pilots and the organization and support of contests at the local, regional, national and international levels of soaring. PASCO is the acronym for the Council. WestWind is the monthly publication of PASCO. Material may be reprinted without permission. The present board will remain in office until November 2006. Current dues are \$25 annually from the month after receipt of payment.

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Elmer Udd,

THE 2006 PASCO SEMINARS, AGM, BANQUET AND AWARDS CEREMONY

Western Aerospace Museum, Oakland, Saturday Nov 4.

Seminars 9am-5pm, Cocktails 6-7pm, Dinner and AGM, Awards, 7-10pm

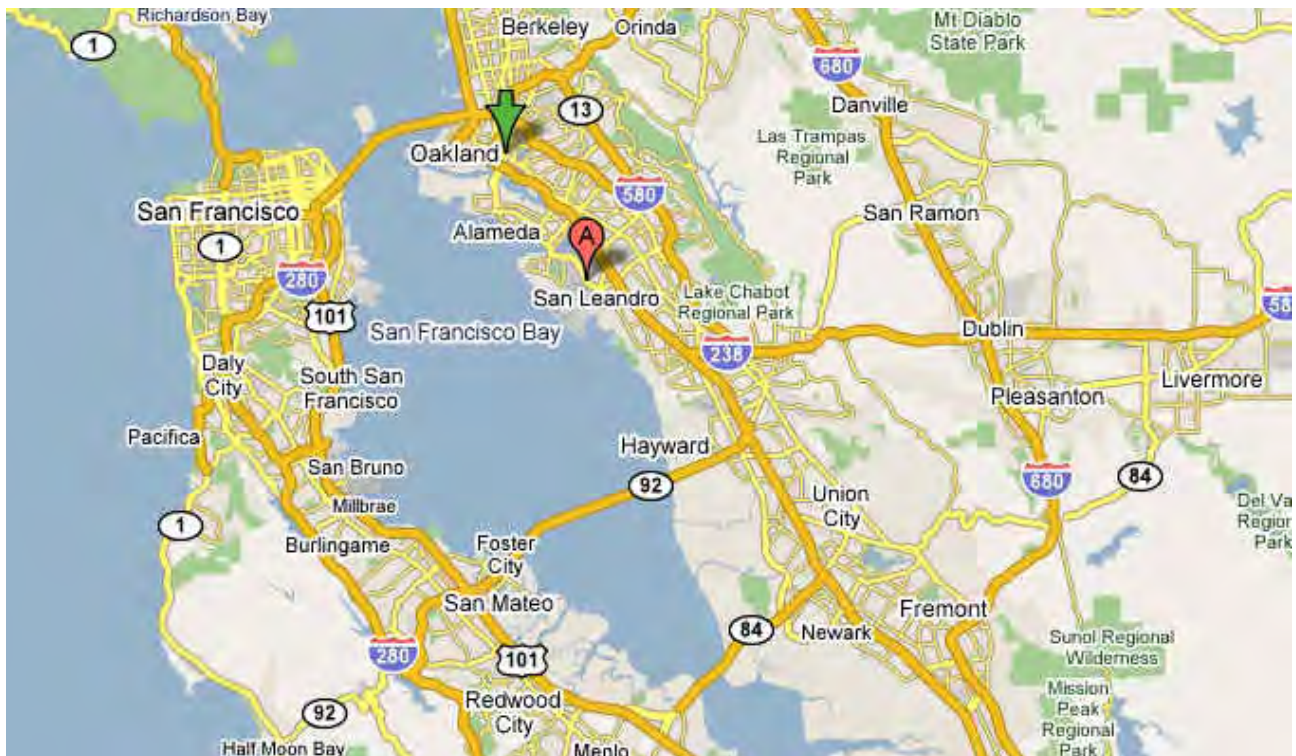
Seminars will include the following – remainder TBD

Minden Airport master plan and gliding Jim Braswell
Reno Tower procedures and glider accommodation Don Brooks
ADSB technology – An alternative to transponders? Marc Ramsey

**DINNER WILL BE BUFFET STYLE, CHICKEN, BEEF and
VEGETARIAN AVAILABLE**

PLEASE RSVP SO WE CAN PLAN THE EVENT

MIKE MAYO - 650-857-0522
echofive@sbcglobal.net



PASCO Board Meetings; Every 1st Wednesday of the month, 7pm,
 Contact Karol Hines (775-747-0569, karoll@sbcglobal.net) for location and directions.
Members welcome; please tell us you're coming.

REGION 11 GLIDER OPERATIONS

Air Sailing, Inc. Airport	Palomino Valley, NV	775-475-0255
Central California Soaring Club	Avenal Gliderport, 600 LaNeva Blvd Avenal CA 93204,	559-386-9552
Ely Soaring	Dan Callaghan P.O.BOX 151296, Ely, NV 89315	775-720-1020 http://www.elysoaring.com
Las Vegas Soaring Center	Jean Airport, lvsoar@vegasnet.net	702-874-1010
Mt. Diablo Soaring, Inc.	Rolf Peterson, Flt. Instructor rolfpete@aol.com	925 447-5620
Northern California Soaring Ass'n (NCSA)	Byron Airport, Byron, CA.	925- 516-7503
Owens Valley Soaring,	Westridge Rd., Rt 2, Bishop, CA 93514	619-387-2673
Hollister Gliding Club,	Hollister Airport – Hollister California, info@soarhollister.com	831-636-3799, 831-636-7705
Soar Minden	Minden-Tahoe Airport, P.O. Box 1764, Minden, NV 89423,	800-345-7627 775-782 7627
Soar Truckee, Inc.,	Truckee Airport, P.O. Box 2657 CA 96160,	530-587-6702
Williams Soaring Center	Williams GliderPort 2668 Husted Road, Williams, CA 95987	530-473-5600 http://www.williamsssoaring.com/

REGION 11 CLUBS & ASSOCIATIONS

Air Sailing, Inc. Airport	Palomino Valley, NV	Ty White	510-490-6765
Bay Area Soaring Associates (BASA) -	Hollister Airport, Hollister, CA;	Miguel Flores,	831-801 2363
Central California Soaring Club	Avenal Gliderport, Avenal, CA.	Mario Crosina,	559 251-7933.
Great Basin Soaring, Inc.	2312 Prometheus Court Henderson, NV89074	Terry Van Noy	(702) 433-9677
Las Vegas Valley Soaring Association	Jean Airport, NV, P.O.Box 19902, Jean, NV 89019,		702-874-1420
Minden Soaring Club	P.O. Box 361, Minden, NV 89423 www.mindensoaringclub.org	Leo Montejo	
Mount Shasta Soaring Center	Siskiyou County Airport, Montague, CA	Gary Kemp,	530-934-2484
Nevada Soaring Association (NSA) -	Air Sailing Gliderport, NV.	Vern Frye	775 825-1125
Northern California Soaring Association (NCSA)	Byron Airport, Byron, CA.	Mike Schneider	925 426-1412
Silverado Soaring Association	739 Pepper Dr. San Bruno, CA 94066;	Paul Wapensky WapenskyPJ@mfr.usmc.mil	650-873-4341
Valley Soaring Association (VSA) -	Williams Glider Port 2668 Husted Road, Williams, CA	Peter Kelly	707 448-6422

WORLD WIDE WEB ADDRESSES - REGION 11

Soaring Society of America	http://www.ssa.org
Pacific Soaring Council	http://www.pacificsoaring.org
Air Sailing Inc.	http://www.airsailing.org
Jim and Jackie Payne - FAI Badge Page	http://home.aol.com/JPAviation
Bay Area Soaring Associates	http://www.flybasa.org
Central California Soaring Club	http://www.soaravenal.com
LAS VEGAS SOARING CENTER	http://www.lasvegassoaring.com
Minden Soaring Club	http://www.mindensoaringclub.org
Mount Shasta Soaring Center	http://www.craggyaero.com/mssc/
Northern California Soaring Assoc.	http://www.norcalsoaring.org/
Silverado Soaring, Inc.	http://www.silveradosoaring.org/
SOAR HOLLISTER	http://www.soarhollister.com/
Williams Soaring Center	http://www.williamssoaring.com/
Valley Soaring Association	http://www.sonic.net/~pjkelly/vsa.html

Editorial

It has finally happened. A mid-air between a jet and a glider in our region. Incredibly, no one was hurt. Given that the glider wing spar only had to move another foot into the cockpit of the jet and all control would probably have been lost either due to pilot injury or mechanical failure, it was a miraculous escape. I need hardly mention that had this been a major carrier airliner the potential consequences for both loss of life and severe restrictions to future soaring activity would have been much higher. Not only those directly involved in the accident, but the whole soaring community in this region (and country) were very, very lucky.

This situation is something we all knew could happen but thought was unlikely. Big Sky theory simply doesn't make a valid argument anymore, given the history of near misses leading up to this latest incident. With some prescience, about a month ago, John Boyce sent me an article about a near miss he had at Air Sailing for publication in West Wind. I've included it in this issue – John makes some excellent points.

PASCO has been advocating transponder installation and usage for many years, despite the lack of a mandatory requirement for them. Air Sailing, Truckee, Minden and Hollister all face real issues with proximity to increased jet traffic in the vicinity. It seems that we no longer have the luxury of the libertarian approach we have taken in the past with respect to transponders – at best this could only buy us some time for a glider friendly solution to emerge. As JJ Sinclair so vividly puts it, the analogy is 'crossing the freeway at night without lights and expecting the cars to see us'. Perhaps now it is time to voluntarily identify, select and implement a solution as part of our regional and national soaring culture before we have one imposed upon us. Fortunately there are some options.

Approximately half of the agenda at this years PASCO seminars will be devoted to education of members on the options available to us. See the agenda at the front of this issue and [please plan on attending](#). Mike Mayo is coordinating the event and he needs you to RSVP so we can get the numbers. Cost for the event and payment details will be distributed through PASCO emailing lists in the near future.

The Region 11 yahoo discussion group is picking up in usage - especially since recent events have highlighted the need for a forum for folks to discuss issues that aren't directly related to their local site – with the recent jet midair there has been a huge amount of excellent discussion stimulated by Jim Herds post requesting input on the issue. There was so much dialogue on this topic that Jim tabulated the input and suggestion and I've included it in this issue – it represents a huge amount of work on Jim's part and allows you, the gentle reader, to examine some of the ideas examined in the discussion. If you are interested in joining the group, please go to http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Region_11 to join.

Since the accident near Minden, Karol Hines has attended the initial NTSB meetings about the accident and her notes are included in this issue. This is just one of her activities and her presence as a representative for regional soaring both at Minden, the SSA and at Air Sailing has been very important – we should all extend our appreciation for her efforts. Thank you Karol!

Our airport based glider operations seem to be eternally at risk from a range of source, either increased general aviation and passenger jet traffic or zoning and local politics. Our privately held glider ports (Williams, Air Sailing and Avenal) are jewels we must both support and sustain through patronage, vigilance and support as true anchors for our regional soaring. Operations at local

airports (Truckee, Hollister, Montague, and Minden) are always susceptible to local and airport politics and require their own special brand of vigilance and support. It inevitably falls on the shoulders of committed local volunteers to bear the brunt of the load here but a thriving operation is easiest to defend. For example, this last Labor Day, Soar Truckee had approximately 50 tows !! It's hard to argue with a business that brings a lot of FAA revenue to the airport.

Despite a recent history of declining number of soaring pilots, our PASCO membership appears to have stabilized and is starting to grow. Not only this, but I think it would appear to any outside observer that in almost every sphere of our activity except the number of soaring pilots we are in a true Golden Age of soaring. Flight achievements continue to grow in leaps and bounds, speeds distances and altitudes are all increasing. The number of events available to the soaring pilot have never been greater – safari's, training camps, contests

(Regional and National), superior weather forecasting, strong social fabric at many of our sites – the list goes on. Each local soaring operation is building up its own niche market and set of committed, supportive customers. Non-Sierra sites like Williams, Avenal, Montague and Hollister have changed the paradigm that long flights are the reserve of summer in the Sierra, glider and instrument performance are all up and so are the soaring performances. It seems to me that our near term imperative is more soaring pilots, especially at the operations that are not currently booming, and more vigilance and activity to safeguard our soaring activities as a whole. If you have ideas and are willing to share them on the Region 11 group, please feel free to join and contribute your perspectives – you don't need to wait for someone else to start a thread!

Until I see you at the Seminars and the Awards Banquet,

Kind Regards, Your Editor.

REGION 11 EVENT CALENDAR 2006

Date	Events	Location	Contact	Phone	URL
Feb 25th	8th PASCO X-C Seminars	UC Berkeley Physics Building	Carl Herold	775-230-0527	
Every other Sat. Mar11 to Oct 9	VSA Race Series	Williams Soaring Center	Noelle Mayes	530-473-5600	www.williamsssoaring.com
Apr 7-16	BASA Wavecamp	Minden, NV	Hans Van Weersch		
Apr 8th	RESCO Spring Safety Seminars	Caltech Campus, Pasadena	Cindy Brinkner		cindyb@caracolesoaring.com
May 5-7	Doc Mayes' Memorial	Williams Soaring Center	Noelle Mayes	530-473-5600	www.williamsssoaring.com
May 13	Opening season Soar Truckee	Soar Truckee, CA		530 587 6702	www.soartruckee.com
May 15-19	Airsailing Thermaling Camp	AirSailing, NV			www.airsoaring.org
May 18-21	32nd Avenal Spring Contest	Avenal , CA	Mario Crosina	559-251-7933	Mario.Crosina@comcast.net
May 21-26	AirSailing Cross-Country Camp	AirSailing NV	David Prather		www.airsoaring.org
June 26 - 30	A,B,C & Bronze Badge Camp.	Soar Truckee		530 587 6702	www.soartruckee.com
June 26-30	Region 11 Championships (Std, 15m,	Ely Nv	Carl Herold	-	www.elysoaring.com
July 4-13	USA 15-Meter Nationals	Montague CA	Gary Kemp		www.ssa.org
July 4th	Truckee Glider Races	Soar Truckee	Sergio Colacevich	530 587 6702	www.soartruckee.com
Jul 15	Truckee Soaring Bash by BASA, NCSA,	Soar Tuckee	Hans Van Weersch		www.soartruckee.com
Jul 15-23	BASA Parowan Safari		Hans Van Weersch		weersch@yahoo.com
July 24 - 29	Sports Class Contest	AirSailing, NV	Tim Taylor	435-713-4952	ttaylor@cc.usu.edu
Aug 19 - 20	Gerlach Dash	AirSailing, NV	Scott Monson	775-972-9479	scottmosen@aol.com
Oct 14	Race Day 15 & Oktoberfest	Williams Soaring Center	Noelle Mayes	530-473-5600	www.williamsssoaring.com
15-Oct	Closing season Soar Truckee				
Nov 4th	PASCO Annual Seminars and Awards Banquet	Western Aviation Museum, Oakland	Mike Mayo	650-857-0522	echofive@sbcglobal.net

PASCO BOARD MEETING MINUTES.

August 1, 2006 Minutes

Call to order at 7:15pm

Board Members Present: Karol Hines, Hans Van Weersch, Jim Alton, Yuliy Gerchikov

Guests Present: Fred LaSor, Jay McDaniel, Bernald Smith

1. Minutes of July 6th meeting were approved with the addition of the Treasurers report which was submitted after the meeting.

2. Treasurers Report:

Checking Account Balance \$ 16,255

Scholarship Account Balance \$ 7,500

Outstanding Accounts Payable - \$ 800 for printing West Wind. Signature authorization on the Scholarship account will be changed to be Hans and Karol. Karol explained the background of the Scholarship fund.

Hans explained that we have a program to award \$250 to student pilots to cover the cost of their examiner fee when they get their license. The application for the award is made by the Instructor on behalf of the student. Since the program started, only two applications have been received. Hans will write a description of the program to be posted on the web site and included in West Wind.

3. No Committee reports were given

4. Karol introduced the 2 new Region 12 Directors Elect, Fred LaSor and Jay McDaniel. Both will assume office as of Jan. 1, 2007, Fred for a three year term and Jay for a 1 year term.

5. Site Champions:

Luke Ashcroft has agreed to be the site champion for Williams. Yuliy will be contacting Dave Cunningham about being site champion for Byron and being Chair of the Safety Committee. Karol will be talking with Air Sailing, and Montague to find site champions for these locations

6. It was reported that at the annual Truckee "Bash" party, a raffle was held to raise money for a local scholarship.

7. Meeting was adjourned by 8 pm

September 6th, 2006 Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7:15.

Board members attending: Karol Hines, Peter Deane, Marc Ramsey, Yuliy Gerchikov, Mike Mayo, Hans VanWeersch, Jim Alton.

Guests: John Volkober, Rolf Peterson, Fred LaSor, Jay McDaniel

1. Minutes of August 1 meeting approved, with change to item 4. Marc will send updated minutes to Peter for publication.

2. Communications Committee: Peter will work with Yuliy on website updates. Priority is to make sure information is correct, and links work. Next West Wind before end of September.

3. SSA Directors, R11: Fred LaSor will replace Karol, Jay McDaniel will replace John Volkober, both effective January 1. Sill need governor for Northern Calif.

4. Carl Herold will send raw contest data to Karol and/or Marc for rescoring and submission to the SSA.

5. Marketing and Safety Chairs are still open. Dave Cunningham may have declined Safety Chair. Mike will contact Dave again to verify. We need Marketing Chair for PASCO redesign.

6. \$200 income from monthly dues last month.

7. Site Champions: no candidates for AirSailing, Hollister, Ely, Montague, Byron or Avenal. Mike Mayo will represent Truckee. Luke Ashcroft and Peter Beecher for Williams. Jay McDaniel from Jean. Fred LaSor will find someone for Minden

8. Hans will put together blurb for West Wind publicizing PASCO \$250 examiner fee awards from scholarship fund.

9. Gavin Wills presentation at Truckee well received. Peter would like write-up from someone who was present. Jim Alton volunteered.

10. Brief review of NTSB meeting in Minden: NTSB, local glider pilots, and NetJet representatives got together to discuss how glider pilots operate in the area. Marc will discuss possibility of FAA ADS-B pilot program with Bernald Smith. Fred will discuss with Marion Barrett. Steve Northcraft is coordinating transponder info for SSA. PASCO will reemphasize need for transponders in Reno area.

11. PASCO Banquet and Safety Seminar. Marc and/or Rolf will arrange for ADS-B presentation. Please send Mike ideas for a keynote speaker.

NEW BUSINESS

12. John Volkober discussed current SSA situation. John asked for feedback from the PASCO board and members.

13. PASCO budget discussion.

14. Mike action item: Provide seminar content within two weeks for West Wind.

15. Hans action item: Begin budget process. Meeting adjourned at 9:17.

16. Treasurers report (received after meeting):

Checking account: 15793.22 (15Aug 06)

Savings account: 270.49 (15Aug 06)

Scholarship fund: 7499.34 (30Jun 06)

MID-AIR NEAR MINDEN

On Monday, August 28th, there was a mid-air collision between an ASG-29 glider in 18 meter configuration and a Hawker corporate jet just southeast of Minden-Tahoe airport. The glider lost its right wing, but the glider pilot, Akihiro Hirao, was able to bail out and parachute safely to the ground. The jet, with the spar of the outer panel of the right wing of the glider imbedded in the left instrument panel and without hydraulics and power to most instruments, made a gear up landing at Carson City Airport. Everyone survived. The only injuries were a gash requiring 17 stitches to the jet pilot's face and some scrapes and bruises suffered by the glider pilot from being dragged along the ground by his parachute before he was able to collapse his canopy.



It was truly a miracle that there was no loss of life or life threatening injuries to any of the 6 souls involved in this accident. A further miracle, for the Soaring community in this area and in this country, is that the NTSB investigator sent to investigate the accident has taken an approach to work with the Soaring community to develop procedures that will allow us to continue flying gliders in the airspace around Reno and Truckee that has seen an explosion in small jet traffic in the recent past.

Nicole Charnon, NTSB Air Safety Investigator, asked for a meeting of representatives from the soaring operations around the area soon after the accident. That meeting took place at the CAP office at Minden-Tahoe Airport on Thursday, August 31st. The people attending the meeting to represent the Soaring Community were: **Bob Semans, Fred LaSor, Mike Moore, Gordon Boettger, Gary Phillips, Karol Hines, Bob Spielman and John Morgan.** In addition to Nicole, there was an FAA Air Safety Investigator from the Office of Accident Investigation in Washington. There were also 3 folks from NetJets, the owners of the Hawker involved in the accident.

What Nicole wanted, and what took place, was a discussion to inform them (FAA, NTSB, NetJets) about glider operations in and around Reno. They asked a lot of very good questions. Nicole was also looking for us to suggest things that could be done to mitigate the risks we all face in areas where jets, general aviation and gliders intermingle. The meeting was very constructive.

There were a LOT of good ideas put forth and Nicole asked to have these ideas documented in more detail and passed along to her.



Later that day the NTSB and the FAA met with Reno TRACON and Oakland Center personnel. As a result of that meeting, Nicole asked that a meeting be organized between a group representing the Soaring Community, Reno TRACON and Oakland Center.

That meeting took place on Monday, September 11th at the TRACON facility at the Reno-Tahoe airport. The group of Soaring representatives at that meeting included **Bob Semans, Fred LaSor, Gary Phillips, Jim Hamilton, Karol Hines, Mike Hoke, Mike Moore and Rolf Peterson.**

Minden NTSB/FAA Meeting Notes

By Karol Hines

I attended a meeting at Minden today (Thursday, August 31st) that was requested late yesterday by the NTSB investigator in charge of investigating Monday's mid-air collision between a glider and a Hawker business jet. These notes were directed as a response to the Soaring Safety Foundation's suggestion that they get involved to provide input to the FAA and "rumor control". Among others attending was an FAA Air Safety Investigator from the Office of Accident Investigation in Washington.

There were 3 folks from NetJets – the rather large company that owned the Hawker involved in the accident. We had representatives from all of the local soaring operations (Soar Truckee, Soar Minden and Air

Sailing) along with several glider pilots that have extensive experience flying in the area. What the NTSB investigator wanted, and what took place, was a discussion to inform them (FAA, NTSB, NetJets) about glider operations in and around Reno. They asked a lot of very good questions. She also was looking for us to suggest things that could be done to mitigate the risks we all face in areas where jets, general aviation and gliders intermingle.

The FAA representative was very surprised to hear that we have had a request into them for an exception to the "always on" rule for transponders in gliders for over 2 years. We are sending a copy of that request to him so he can look into perhaps expediting an NPRM.

Everyone took copious notes. The NTSB investigator asked us to pass along many of the "documents" we referenced (Ops procedures, safety procedures, safety seminar schedules and outlines, etc.). I agreed to be a coordination point to gather the information and pass it along to her. She will share it with the interested parties at the FAA, etc. She also asked for our suggestions on risk mitigation. There were a LOT of good ideas put forth and she asked if I could also coordinate getting these ideas documented in more detail and passed along to her.

Several of us in the room emphasized that this is NOT just a local (Minden area) problem. We cited several areas that we were aware of that there is a lot of intermingling of glider and jet traffic.

At the end of the meeting, the NTSB investigator briefed us on her findings so far after talking to the pilot and co-pilot of the jet, the glider pilot and Reno ATC and reviewing the radar trace at Reno. So, I have the correct facts. I am reluctant to put them in writing here prior to the NTSB publishing their preliminary findings. I can tell you that there is no "blame" being pointed at ANY party. Each pilot was operating in total compliance with the FAR's and there is no ATC issue. The glider had a transponder but it was not turned on - and did not have to be turned on (per the NTSB). The jet was following directions from Oakland Center and was JUST switching frequencies to contact Reno Approach. BOTH pilots, glider and jet, did a phenomenal job of getting on the ground, Akihiro under a parachute and Annette, injured with NO hydraulics to lower the gear and NO instruments to guide her.

I have a partial team assembled to accomplish the above mentioned tasks, and intend to have input from the SSA Government Liaison and Airspace committees and the SSF before sending a "package" to the NTSB. NetJets also offered to lend their considerable influence with the FAA to any suggestions we might have to improve safety in the skies.

The FAA is not taking their input from anything that is

written in the newspaper or posted on the web, so I don't believe we need any further damage control there other than, perhaps, to right things for the sake of public opinion which, of course, is VERY important. I think that something needs to be posted on the SSA web site and perhaps someone could be assigned to write an article to be distributed to the press (local AND national) that gives all the correct facts. I would be happy to provide the details to someone who could produce a more professional article than I could.

NTSB summary of the Sept 11th meeting sent by Nicole Charnon for follow up:

"I believe the briefing from Rolf helped Donald (*Brooks, Air Traffic Manager*) see that the soaring societies are just as concerned about traffic safety as ATC. ***It helps that your group has published transponder information in your West Wind flyer since 1998.***

As a result of yesterday's meeting and other discussions between the glider groups and Steve Northcraft (*SSA Government Liaison Committee Chair*), I will work on pushing for:

- 1.) A national transponder code.
- 2.) Air Traffic Control training regarding the transponder code.
- 3.) A more streamlined means of getting transponder installations approved by FAA.
- 4.) A means of getting FAA support for transponder cost-sharing for operators with multiple ships.
- 5.) An extra radar antenna for Reno .
- 6.) The development of a mode C area around Reno so that transient traffic will comply with the transponder needs.

If your group can work with Reno TRACON and Oakland Center on the following:

- 1.) A working group to develop standard procedures for transponder-equipped-gliders that operate in the Reno area (to include areas where transponder use can be turned off for battery conservation).
- 2.) A working group to develop standard procedures and operating areas for non-transponder-equipped-gliders that operate in the Reno area.
- 3.) A working group to develop standard procedures for gliders that enter and exit wave windows.
- 4.) A working group to work with Reno and Oakland to discuss optional practical routing areas for inbound and outbound traffic from Reno .

I will continue to work with Steve Northcraft regarding the transponder code and installation process. If you need any help with your working groups, please do not hesitate to contact me. If it is not too much trouble, I would like to request a bi-weekly update from you and Donald regarding any progress made with the individual

working groups. This way, if we get hung up on a particular area, the NTSB can deal with it early on and try to mitigate any issues.

Thanks again for your efforts in gathering a fine group of meeting attendees and your efforts in improving safety in the area.

I'll be in touch to keep you abreast of my progress. Take care, Nicole

Nicole L. Charnon
Air Safety Investigator
NTSB; Southwest Regional Office

The work ahead....

Clearly the situation is very delicate for us. Nicole has indicated the possibility of recommending airspace changes as part of reducing the risk of another accident, though it is unclear at present exactly what she has in mind.

Thanks to the rapid response of our SSA directors (Karol Hines and Steve Northcraft from Washington) and the PASCO team, Nicole wants our input and participation in the process through the 4 working groups. This is our opportunity to be able to work with the NTSB and FAA to minimize impact to our soaring activities while minimizing the chance of another jet-glider midair, which is her priority goal.

PASCO has already put the working groups in place and they are working on the key issues Nicole wanted input on right now.

Way Too Close by John D. Boyce

Recent dialogue about gliders, transponders and airline traffic has been interesting to read, and it reminds me of something that happened to me just a few years ago. The experience prompted me to install a transponder in my 15-meter ship, which I fly regularly out of Air Sailing Glider port near Reno, Nevada. I'm really glad that I have a transponder now and as the following narrative will tell, I should have installed one much sooner than I did. I put it off for the usual reasons: expense, complexity, battery concerns and so forth.

In my pre-transponder days, I would always listen to Reno Approach Control when flying at Air Sailing, and sometimes I would talk to them too. I always felt that this was a wise thing to do, since there is significant airline and glider activity in the vicinity of Reno-Tahoe Airport. This may have saved my life one fateful day when I came close to being run down by an airliner which was coming almost straight toward me at about 370 knots! I was thermaling at 11,000 feet near Virginia Peak, not far from the Reno class Charlie airspace. I was listening

to Reno Approach Control, but for whatever reason had not contacted them during my flight. They called traffic to an incoming airliner: "Sky West so-and so, traffic at 12 o'clock and seven miles, primary target only, type and altitude unknown, possible glider." As soon as I heard this, I instantly forgot about the thermal I was working and went to hyper-alert scan mode. I kept circling, scanning intently but I didn't see anything. Then I heard another call, "Sky West so-and-so, traffic now at 12 o'clock and 3 miles." This is when things got scary...I kept scanning intently.

I had been thermalling to the left, and over my right shoulder I suddenly saw the jet airliner coming toward me. His landing lights were on and even in the brilliant sun of that cloudless day they looked very bright, the kind of intensity you see when they're aiming almost right at you. He looked to be about a mile or so away, about 10 seconds at his speed. I saw him for all of a second or so, then I lost him over my right shoulder because of my continuing turn. My mind raced and I thought, "I've got to maneuver, but which way, which way, which way???" I was in a tight left turn, and it would take time to roll out and change direction. I thought, "up or down, up or down?" At thermalling configuration I had little energy to pull up so that option was out. What about down? Being an arrival, the airliner was probably descending, so would nosing down sharply only make matters worse? I could go hard right out of my steep left turn, but would that just move me more in front of him? Was I already in front of him, for that matter? I could continue my steep left turn, but couldn't that cause the same problem as going the other way? What to do, what to do???

I decided to keep turning left. I swiveled my head to the left and quickly picked up the airliner again, this time over my left shoulder. Wow, he was much closer, and it was now obvious what to do. I slammed hard right instinctively and quickly lost sight of him as he shot by right at my altitude. He was very, very close, but I never heard or felt a thing. After a few moments of shaking my head and pinching myself, I heard Approach saying "...do you want to file a near-miss?" The airliner captain said something like "yeah, we'll do that..."

And just like that it was over. I dusted myself off and continued to have a fun flight. I landed later in the afternoon after an enjoyable ride, but still I was shaking my head and trying to make sense out of what had happened. Had I done the right thing? Was it smart or stupid to keep from maneuvering right away? Should I have done something sooner, perhaps even immediately? I didn't say anything on the radio, and I kept mum after I landed too.

Air Sailing Glider port has a very proactive and constructive relationship with Reno Approach Control, and word soon came back that the airline captain had

indeed filed a near-miss. He reported pulling 2 G's to the left for a second or two to avoid me, and said that as he passed, I was hard over in a right turn. Thus it appears that we both went in good directions. I believe I saw the airliner before he saw me, but I also think he took evasive action sooner than I did. He probably picked me up shortly after I lost sight of him over my right shoulder. When I saw him again and went hard right, he was already beginning to yank his airplane to the left. This was indeed a very close call, something I will never forget.

I called the Approach Control Supervisor the next day to give my side of the incident, and he was very friendly and supportive. Clearly, there were no violations and no one had done anything wrong. As a matter of fact, the system had worked and done what it was supposed to do. I concluded that I should have been talking to the Approach Controller, but I'm glad that at least I was listening and participating in the vigilance.

If there was any lesson I learned from this, it was to know that when the airliner was coming at me, there really wasn't much I could have done unless I had picked him up while he was still at least a few miles away. Can we glider pilots always be assured of doing this as we thermal, glide, and navigate up there? When I did see him fleetingly over my right shoulder, he was much closer than a few miles. I was mostly stationary while at 370 knots, the airliner was covering a nautical mile every ten seconds or so. When I heard myself being called as traffic at 3 miles, both the airline pilots and I had about half a minute to find one another, decide what to do and then do it. Without being on the Approach frequency, I would never have known what was unfolding. Would my normal scan have picked up the threat? What would have happened? I leave it to the reader to consider this further.

I always fly with a transponder now. To my pleasant surprise, there has been no trouble with electrical power at all. I have a typical 16 volt Power-Sonic battery pack, and it powers the radio, transponder, encoder and electric variometer just fine. There is plenty of juice left even after four hours and more of flying. The transponder is simple and easy to operate, and I feel so much safer now. I still listen and talk to Approach Control, but the transponder makes the process much easier for both me and the controller. It really is an amazing device and even though it only weighs about a pound, it is worth tons for my peace of mind.

Minden, Airspace and Transponders – A Summary of Inputs (By Jim Herd)

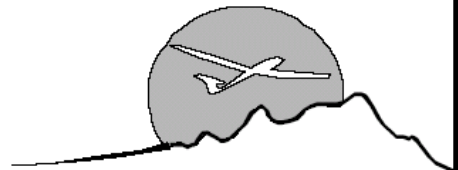
Here is the result of my assignment to collect and distill all the internet chatter on Region_11 yahoo group resulting from the recent midair near Minden .

First, a couple of editorial comments. I have been very impressed at the quality of many of the postings on Mr. Deane's new PASCO chat group. This is the source for much of my summary, but also I researched Rec. Aviation Soaring and several other chat groups from across the country. As you know this issue has gained national attention. I also have included content from a few Jet Jockeys from around the country who have written to me privately. My overall conclusion is that folks are generally ready for some change, in fact most soaring pilots will embrace it. Meanwhile, there remains a contingent that is not interested in anything that will impact their soaring status quo. I have chosen the following style for this report: a list of every significant idea that I have found, with the associated pros and con's for each. Obviously, this list will never be complete. SCO , SSA, and folks from other associated groups. Remember, I am trying to faithfully summarize ALL viewpoints in the attachment – right or wrong. They don't necessarily reflect the views of the author.

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IDEA	PRO'S	CON'S
<p>I. Remove FAR exemption for gliders operating without transponders above 10,000'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greatly improves glider "visibility" to ATC and jets. • This exemption would never be granted in today's environment, so why do we retain it? • All the old barriers to transponders in gliders are largely solved, except the cost of about \$2500. Batteries, solar panels, transponder size, weight and power consumption – all are now easily solved for almost all gliders. • Soaring could bargain with the FAA – we'll accept removal of the transponder exemption if we get to turn the transponders OFF below that altitude. • Practically speaking, Jet Jockeys can do little to see gliders while traveling very fast, while also very busy on the descent. But gliders CAN do something – add a transponder! So it's just a matter of who has the practical ability to improve safety. • The repercussions of a major midair with huge loss of life will spread far beyond the body count. The entire aviation community and public-at-large would turn against gliders and radically restrict our sport. It would probably not survive. These repercussions are far too severe to take a risk. • Look to Europe to understand the potential implications. British soaring pilots are now being forced to install transponders in every single glider! (Mode S, I think.) • Our risk probability has increased markedly since the rules were put in place (much more fast jet traffic above 10,000', and many more sleek/irvisible gliders), and with VLI's on the way, the risk is projected to get much 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expense – it may be no big deal to pilots with expensive ships and high incomes, but many glider pilots would be spending a high percentage of their ship's value and more than their available disposable income. • A few flight schools would be seriously burdened and possibly totally unable to remain in business. • Transponders will be obsolete soon, so do NOT mandate them for gliders. We have Mode-S and ADS-B, and they are all much more expensive than Mode-C. • We need a totally different electronic solution for gliders and someone should get on with designing it. • The status quo has a tolerable risk. • This idea is only supported by pilots who have a transponder or who can easily afford one. • Gliders face much more probable safety risks – deal with those first. • The Big Sky Theory has worked pretty well for about a century. • Technical barriers are battery power, weight, panel space, and cost. • ATC would get inundated with gliders on their screens. They would just selectively tune them out and it would be a waste of time. • In the wide open deserts of the West transponders do no good. • Many aircraft above 10,000' do NOT have TCAS, so they won't see a glider with a transponder unless ATC provides a warning. • Force the Jet planes to make much steeper descents so they don't fly over Minden.

Midair, Airspace, Transponders

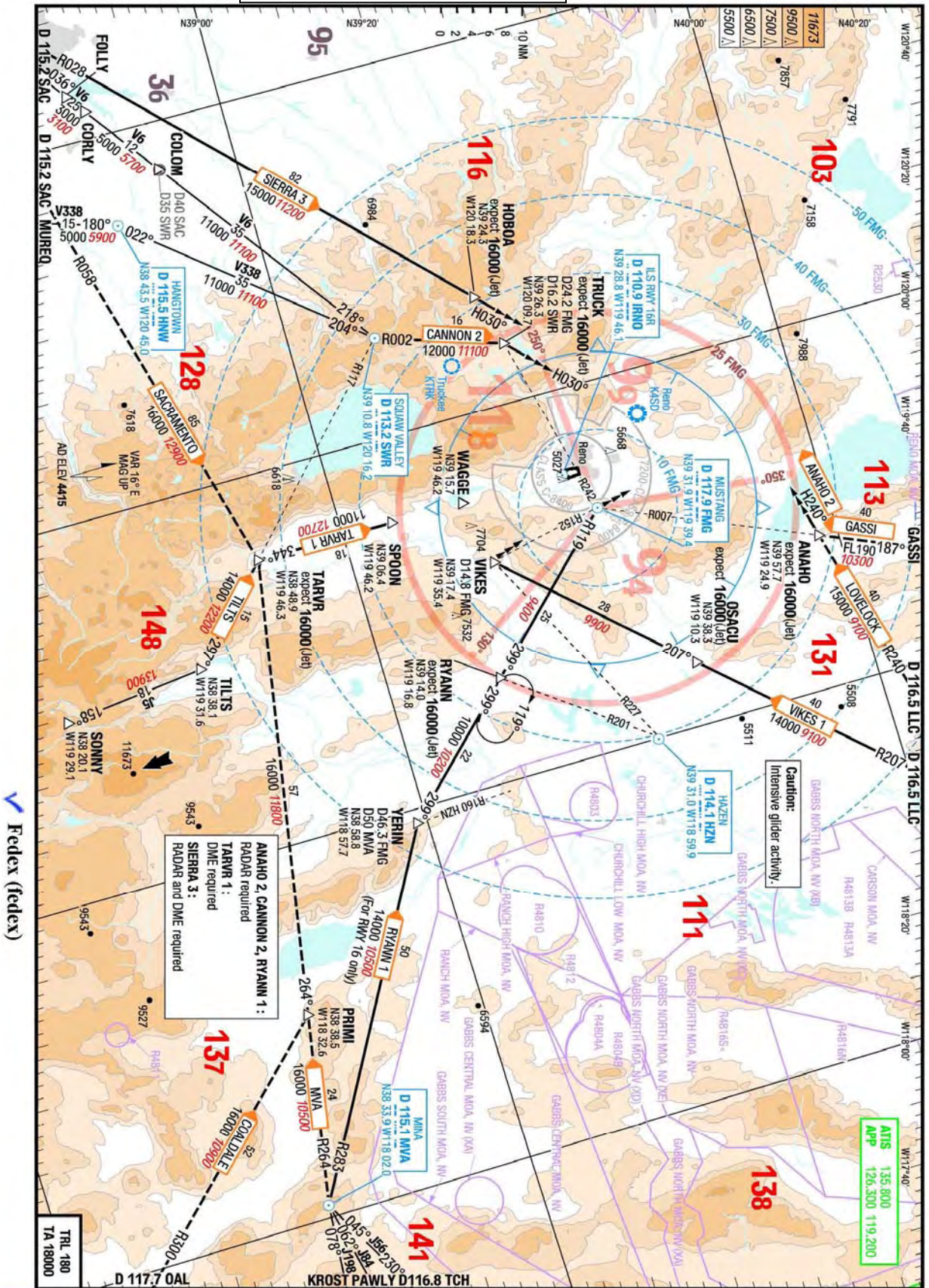
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • worse • In the big picture of aviation as a whole, this one is a no-brainer. If we don't get behind it, it will be forced upon us, so why not get some Executive Points by initiating the idea? • Transponders are the known and proven method to greatly improve safety above 10,000' – so who are we to buck that trend? • Alternate technologies are out there, but very far from widespread use. The real question is this – how long will Mode-C transponders and associated equipment (ATC ground equipment & TCAS) be viable? The answer is 10+ years. • Transponders would protect commercial aviation against US. It's not really about protecting the glider pilot. So it's not a matter of personal choice, it's a matter of protecting everyone and that can only happen if everyone has a transponder. • Jets with 6 or more seats must have a TCAS, so virtually all the fast traffic above 10,000' will see a glider with a transponder – it's that simple • There are documented studies that demonstrate “see and be seen” does NOT work above 100 knots – so what is the rationale to say it is safe to be without a transponder above 10,000' – where traffic can be flying faster than 400 knots? • This move would be very simple, universal and easy to understand by all. It would also close a “loophole” that is generally NOT understood by Jet Jockeys. (They assume every aircraft above 10,000' will be transponder-equipped.) • If a pilot can't afford the expense or can't 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • below FL180 • Force the jets to slow down to a speed where they can see gliders and take evasive action before hitting them • Most military jets don't have TCAS – so a transponder will only help if they are getting traffic advisories from ATC • As a compromise, force gliders to carry transponders above 10,000' but only in special areas like the Pine Nuts
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110000 - Airspace Transponders

<p>2. Allow gliders to switch transponders OFF below 10,000' and not install them at all if the glider will never exceed 10,000'</p>	<p>solve a design problem in your glider – stay below 10,000'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent with previous SSA request. • Reasonable compromise – wouldn't affect most training gliders and older gliders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recent SSA request and MPRM is on a weaker footing after the radar. • Many jet folks think gliders should be transponder-equipped at all altitudes.
<p>3. Step up the encouragement and education about airspace and transponders, but change NO rules.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rules have worked just fine for many years. • It is a matter of personal freedom and individual conscience. • There is a huge void in knowledge between glider pilots and Jet jockeys – fixing this will fix the problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recent radar highlighted the tremendous exposure we all face • The current policy of heavily encouraging transponders in gliders just isn't working • Since everyone appeared to be following the rules, this radar shows the rules to be entirely inadequate
<p>4. Jet pilots are busy during let-down and traveling 300 to 500 mph above 10,000', so even though they are under VFR rules, it is impossible to "see and avoid". Therefore we must look to technology solutions – transponders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science has proven this to be true, so we had better deal with it • The only reason we got the exemption was because the leader of the F.A.A was a glider pilot all those years ago 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's the Jet Jockey's problem, not ours
<p>5. Modify airspace allocation all around Reno and look at the situation all across the country</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower cost to pilots • Almost immediate improvement with no long-term implications. • ATC seems ready to do it at Reno • NetJets and other commercial jet operators have already changed their M.O. around Reno 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resistance from the Jet crowd and ATC. • Costs money to change all the charts • Only a partial solution in very localized areas • Difficult to train and almost impossible to police • Would take a huge effort to look at the entire national airspace system and negotiate with each authority wherever an airspace conflict is identified • Only a very partial solution that wouldn't cover high-speed jets (commercial & military) outside normal traffic lanes
<p>6. Communication and training on airspace and transponders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise the profile of all this at PASCOC safety seminars and SSA Conventions, plus newsletters and magazines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fine, this is necessary but certainly insufficient

RENO AIRSPACE ARRIVAL DIAGRAM

Changes: Notes added



Passive Proximity Warning Systems (By Harry Fox)

I have the Zacon MRX unit, which I purchased late in the spring. I use it in gliders and also in my Citabria. Here is what it does:

1. It listens for transponder replies from other aircraft in the area. These aircraft don't need to be TCAS equipped, they just need to have a transponder that is turned on. Provided the other aircraft has a mode C transponder, the MRX will read the reported altitude from the other aircraft's transponder replies. The MRX estimates the distance to the other aircraft based on the strength of the transponder signal. The MRX does not have any ability to determine the direction the transponder signal is coming from. (But Zacon has another model, the XRX, that does determine relative heading. The XRX is bigger and much more expensive.)

The MRX does not query other transponders to cause them to send a reply signal. But the other transponders are always sending out replies to queries from ATC radar and from TCAS-equipped aircraft in the area (i.e., airliners and business jets). If you are down low in some remote valley in Nevada there may be no radar coverage to cause the transponders on another aircraft to send out transponder replies. But just about everywhere I fly, transponders are sending out replies several times per minute.

2. The MRX listens to your transponder to get your reported altitude. If you don't have a transponder, it has its own internal altimeter to determine your altitude. So, it works fine in a glider that has no transponder.

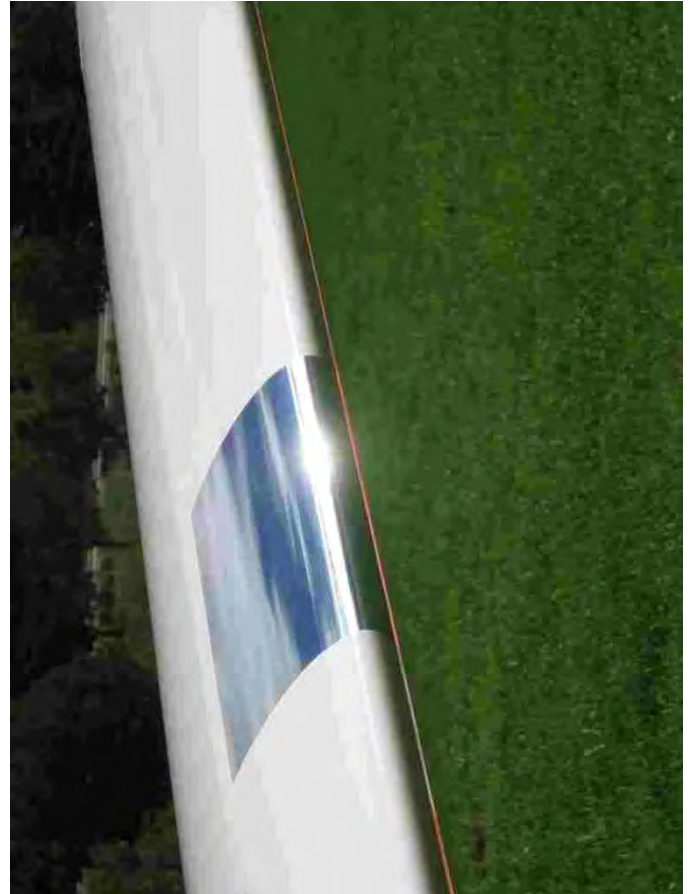


A Picture of the Zacon MRX

3. The MRX compares your altitude to the reported altitude from other aircraft. It then computes which other aircraft are the greatest threat, based on relative altitude and distance. An aircraft close in altitude is rated as a higher threat than an aircraft close in miles. For example, an aircraft 4 miles away at your altitude would be rated a higher threat than an aircraft 1 mile away but

3000 feet above or below. The MRX displays the distance and relative altitude to the nearest threat. For example, it might say "2.0 +05" to indicate that another aircraft is 2 miles away and 500 feet above you. It also displays an up or down arrow if the other aircraft is climbing or descending relative to you.

When I turn my unit on, it is set to display aircraft only if they are within 5 miles and plus or minus 2000 feet. I can re-set it to plus or minus 5000 feet.



Reflective Wing Tape – A real visibility aid??

Most of the time, the relative distance figure is pretty good but not super accurate. The relative altitude figure depends on how accurate the altitude encoder is in the other aircraft (and in your aircraft). Occasionally, I have had it tell me an aircraft was 200 feet below me when it was actually 300 feet above me. But most of the time the relative altitude figure is accurate within a few hundred feet, so at least I know whether to look up or down.

The biggest benefit is that it gets me to really look around thoroughly whenever a nearby aircraft is displayed. When you have been flying out in Nevada for an hour without seeing another aircraft, it is easy to get complacent and forget that an "enemy aircraft" can appear at any time. Last weekend, Ramy and I were both flying near Hollister with our transponders on. My

MRX would let me know when Ramy was nearby. When we were sharing the same thermal, it would even tell me whether Ramy was out-climbing me or I was out-climbing him. When it said I was going up relative to Ramy, I could feel smug about my superior thermaling skills (or maybe superior luck). When it said he was going up relative to me, I could re-center the thermal in Ramy's direction.

More details, visit www.zaonflight.com

TAGARs! v3.0 **Truckee Airport Gliding Air Races!**

(By Sergio Colacevich)

The third edition of the TAGARs! took place on Tuesday, July 4, 2006. Eleven gliders, including two two-seaters, threw themselves into the Races. And again they got joy and challenge.

Actually in this particular edition the challenge was overwhelmingly exceeding the joy, which was present all right, but not as pervasive as in previous events. The difference in joy was due to the soaring conditions, somewhat objectionable at first and slowly deteriorating with the passing of the hours. Note that the differences in joy might be positive or negative depending on how masochist a person is, and in the case of glider pilots the degree of masochism is notoriously high – elation after desperation seems to be what we get from this sport and what, in our depravation crave for, becoming one of the main reasons for us to go back flying once again.

So, eleven masochists I mean eleven pilots began the race, actually 13 pilots considering the pilot-passengers in the two-seaters. Right from the start it did not look easy: The pilots reported difficulties in reaching the miserable (for Truckee) altitude of 12,000', and one of them was fighting around 8,000'. Of course we do not say names but Tony Gaechter in 1A was the one. The start was first anticipated but then delayed waiting for Tony Gaechter (we do not say names) until it was held at the initially scheduled time of 1:30 PM after all.

Unfortunately several pilots were not able to get the start altitude of 11,000', so it was decided to hold 11,000' as a nominal altitude, and those unable to start that high would start at any altitude they were able to achieve. Mike and Nancy Mayo (they are not brother and sister, they are married) got the starting procedure on the radio in an exemplary way. Unfortunately because of the marked differences in altitude, the line of gliders was not as straight as it was supposed to be, and the heights at the start were variable from 7,200' to 8,800'. Indeed, Jonathan Hughes in UV (no names), being the one at 7,200' had to go directly from the start to the landing pattern. The rest of the race was a continuation of the start: Pilots slowly had to renounce and gliders had to

land. Following Jonathan, Jim and Bryan in CC landed after turning the first turn point of Martis Peak, while Jeremy Zawodny in 1M and Hans Van Weersch in 1LV (no names please) were able to reach the second turn point of Verdi before abandoning the race. But a spirited battle was taking place between MX, L8, YD and L6 who were really close together, exchanging position at each turn point. 1A, after so much struggle for gaining altitude at the start, was going strong and among the best.

Use of Mode C Transponders

Reno, Nevada

The potential conflict between gliders and commercial air traffic near Reno has increased with the growth of commercial jet traffic into Reno-Tahoe Airport (RNO) during the past few years. PASCO emphasizes that glider pilots operating in the Reno area must be alert for all air traffic arriving and departing RNO.

Transponder signals are received by Traffic Collision Avoidance Systems (TCAS) on board commercial aircraft as well as by Air Traffic Control (ATC) Radar. By Air Traffic Control (ATC) Letter of Agreement, gliders in the Reno area can transmit the 0440 transponder code in the blind, without establishing radio contact with Reno Approach Control.

PASCO recommends that gliders operating cross country, within 50 NM of Reno-Tahoe Airport, install and use a Mode C altitude encoding transponder.

A new page has been added to the Minden Soaring Club Web site: <http://www.mindensoaringclub.org/>. Look under the WELCOME page for a new section for those soaring out of Truckee, Minden, or Air Sailing. Please study this material on safe soaring within the Reno ATC area.

Other skirmishes were fought in the rear, followed by the spectators on the display map were the various animals representing the racing gliders were moved according to the position reports transmitted by radio. Looking at the board, you could see how a certain couple of gliders were racing "neck and neck", or as better described by the ladies moving the animal representative of the gliders, "beak and horn".

The second round saw the landing of 1PS, 1A, DL and - surprise! - John Fitch in L6, the winner of the two preceding TAGARs! John was able to complete the second circuit, but just did not have any more altitude to spare and had to abandon. Actually several competitors were passing the Gate at an altitude lower than the prescribed minimum altitude of 8,000' – they just could not climb to the necessary height. They were incurring in a 10 points penalty, but just could not avoid it. Thermals weak, broken, suddenly disappearing were the norm

today. Some competitors tried to gain altitude at the Red Rocks and then go back to the gate above the minimum altitude, so as to trade time for points. The tactic was useful only if the time spent looking for lift was not too long.

However, the meager soaring conditions were giving an advantage to the spectators on the ground: the gliders could be seen much closer, even the numbers on the wing could be read. And on course, we could hear comments from the pilots: "I am at the White House, and so low I can see through the windows". And another: "Me too and I can see you through the windows from the other side of the peak".

So only three gliders began the third round, and they finished it too. Mike Schneider in MX, Yuliy Gerchikov in L8 and Dean Aldinger in YD really got it going, really neck and neck or we can say nose and nose (of the glider). Please look at their traces, you will see what I mean. The arrival at the very end of here race was highly spectacular: We could see the three glider coming (low) toward the gate, L8 start a turn to the right, then continue, YD and MX race through the Gate at low altitude and seemingly at the same time! Really a racing finish.

Although at the time MX was declared the winner by reason of him been higher at the crossing of the Gate, the exact determination of the winner could be made only later, through the analysis of the GPS traces. Please look at [The Finish](#). On the bottom of the image are the traces as downloaded from the GPS. On the upper part of the page is the analysis of the traces. The estimate time of crossing the gate for MX was 16:22:04.7. The time for YD was 16:33:25.0. So MX crossed the gate 0.3 seconds ahead of YD and is the computer-proven winner. Times around the course, as radioed by the competitors, is shown in the [Circuit Times](#).

I confess an error: At the Award Ceremony I declared Dean Aldinger (YD) the second arrived and Yuliy Gerchikov (L8) the third, but that was not correct. According to the points scored, Yuliy is second and Dean is third with a difference of 2 points over a total possible score of 100. "My apologizing". So those two guys should exchange the insignia ribbons – no, no need to exchange the mugs, which may have already been used.

This year several pilots incurred in penalties. We have mentioned the penalties due to crossing the gate beneath 8,000', a fact that had happened very rarely in the preceding edition, and that was due to the anemic soaring conditions of this day. Surprising was the high number of pilots not turning properly around the turning points, especially around the Martis Peak, a fact which can be seen well in their traces. Maybe the turn point coordinates are not correct, and the pilot is turning

around the point, which can be seen clearly, instead of looking at the coordinates. But, for the turning to be properly executed it must be made around the coordinates of the point. For the first time in the history of the TAGARs! I assessed a penalty of 1 point per each tent of a mile (10 points per mile). Please see the [Penalties](#) table. However, these penalties are small and did not affect the final standing of the competitors. Please see the [Scoreboard](#) and the [Final Results](#).

The three finishers [Traces](#) are spectacular to see. Watching them in See You, they show the closeness of the competitors, their adventures and drama. Especially interesting it is to place all three together in the same display, and watch their different choices, that took them to be together at the finish anyway.

All pilots reported how they had to fight to fly until they could not continue any more – one of those days in Truckee, albeit exceptional for July 4. All reported though, that it was fun (read the comments about Dr. Masoch above and also, consider that glider pilots sometimes are plain lying, or if you prefer, plane lying).

Many volunteers helped the successful running of the event: Radio announcers Mike and Nancy Mayo, animal-movers Millie Alton, Connie Sanford, Ann Fitch, Rebecca Archie, Irina Gerchikov, coordinator Karol Hines, clock loaner Jim Alton, gazebo loaner Rich Pearl, powerful radio loaner Midge Aldinger (yes both the radio and the loaner are powerful), and the expert and dedicated staff of Soar Truckee: For this year, we have "singing line boys" from the musical *My Fair Lady*, a rare find in glider ports – and they feel pretty.

2006 15 Meter Nationals, Montague CA

This was a very fine contest put on by the **Mount Shasta Soaring Club**. Contest Manager was Rich George, Contest Director was Charlie 'Lite' Minner, Scorer was George O'Leary, with a host of great line help, ground organization and the loan of Dean Caldwell's spotless hangar for the pilots meeting. Chief tow pilot was Kenny Price. Day by day details are available on line at the SSA website (www.ssa.org). Winner was our own Ray Gimney in a close race with Rick Walters. This makes a remarkable TWELVE National titles for Ray, a huge lifetime achievement. Congratulations Ray!!

Being a 'local' Nationals, I've highlighted region 11 pilots in bold – quite a good showing by all! John Seaborn (A8) will be writing a full report of the contest in Soaring Magazine so I'm just posting results and a brief recognition of local volunteers for now.

Day 9 Official Scores

Cumulative		ID	Name	Glider	Day		Speed	Distance	Remarks	
Rank	Points				Rank	Points			Code	Penalty Points
1	8111	7V	Gimmey, Ray	ASW-27B	7	913	66.67	212.99		
2	8072	OO	Walters, Rick	Ventus 2B	1	1000	73.04	232.17		
3	7978	A8	Seaborn, John	Ventus 2B	6	916	66.91	213.63		
4	7573	DJ	Schwenkler, Elizabeth	Ventus 2Cx	20	771	56.28	207.57		
5	7418	DLB	Bush, Dale	Ventus 2C	8	904	66.02	212.15		
6	7244	P7	Iltner, Gary	Ventus C	19	783	57.21	216.99		
7	7227	99	Indrebo, Rick	ASW-27B	4	934	68.25	213.93		
8	7215	SN	Northcraft, Steve	LS-8	9	903	65.95	213.83		
9	7110	2T	Deane, Peter	LS-8	5	929	67.86	219.55		
10	7030	8N	Ladd, Daniel	ASW-27B	3	936	68.34	221.19		
11	6871	16	Greenhill, David	Discus 2A	18	795	58.08	199.38		
12	6749	89	Indrebo, E.J.	ASW-27B	2	947	69.15	220.69		
G	6430	GJ	Milner, Brian	Ventus 2Bx	13	835	60.99	182.75		MT
13	6378	34	Gere, Jonathan	Ventus 2Bx	17	802	58.56	196.37		
14	6359	OE	Epp, Bob	Discus 2B	16	808	59.01	176.85		MT
15	6235	TT	Taylor, Timothy A	Ventus B	10	876	63.99	213.72		
16	6001	NT	Cannon, Walter	Discus 2B	11	838	61.20	186.13		
17	5818	SD	Pfiffner, Richard	Ventus	23	717	52.38	184.01		
18	5775	JJ	Sinclair, John	Genesis 2	15	819	59.81	185.71		
19	5587	CM	Crosina, Mario	Ventus 2Ax	14	827	60.37	180.21		MT
20	5447	1CR	Reinholt, Craig	Discus 2B	12	837	61.10	192.92		
21	4659	1B	Darke, James	ASW-20	24	661	48.30	186.46		
22	4654	DP	Holtz, Russell	Vega T-65D	22	744	54.36	190.77		
23	4612	PS	Dismukes, Key	ASW-20C	21	770	56.23	191.26		
24	4339	MAL	Kemp, Gary	Ventus B	25	0	0.0	0.0	W, F	
25	3993	11L	Oldershaw, Paul	Ventus	25	0	0.0	0.0	W, F	
26	3846	NF	Smith, Stephen	LS-6	25	0	0.0	0.0	W, F	
27	2647	98	Alexander, Peter	ASW-27B	25	0	0.0	0.0	W, F	



Region 11 Championships, ELY, NV July 2006 (Peter Deane)

A very enjoyable and challenging contest- all kinds of weather- we flew 7 days including 2 practice days. A disappointing turnout- where was everyone?? The flying was great. A great team of volunteers including Dan Gudgel towing & Wx and Hannes Linke as CD, Charlie Hayes came up to tow, as well as the Ely Soaring regulars. A very friendly time.

Highlight was the presence of the Air Force Academy cadets- 2 Duo Discii and a Discus 2, a major, 2 captains and about 6 cadets. Polite, talented, motivated young people- a real pleasure to be around.

The weather was quite variable and strong, with plenty of moisture and thunderstorms and virga a-plenty, typically requiring large route detours, strategic decision making and careful cloud reading. CD Hannes Linke made good use of the Turn Area Task option this contest which allowed the contestants to be very safe or really get themselves into trouble if they were too greedy. One day (day 3) the entire field landed out trying to go too far on a day that overdeveloped massively blocking the way home from the north for all. (see land out pictures).

We had several days devalued due to land outs in the strong but rapidly cycling conditions which trapped many- these were not beginners conditions – but all off-field land outs were safe with no damage despite the forbidding terrain. There are more landable ranches than might at first be assumed, considering the population density in the Great Basin approaches that of the Pacific Ocean. The last day was truly spectacular with bodacious conditions – I finished 400km at nearly 95mph. Incidentally, the start cylinder height was fairly

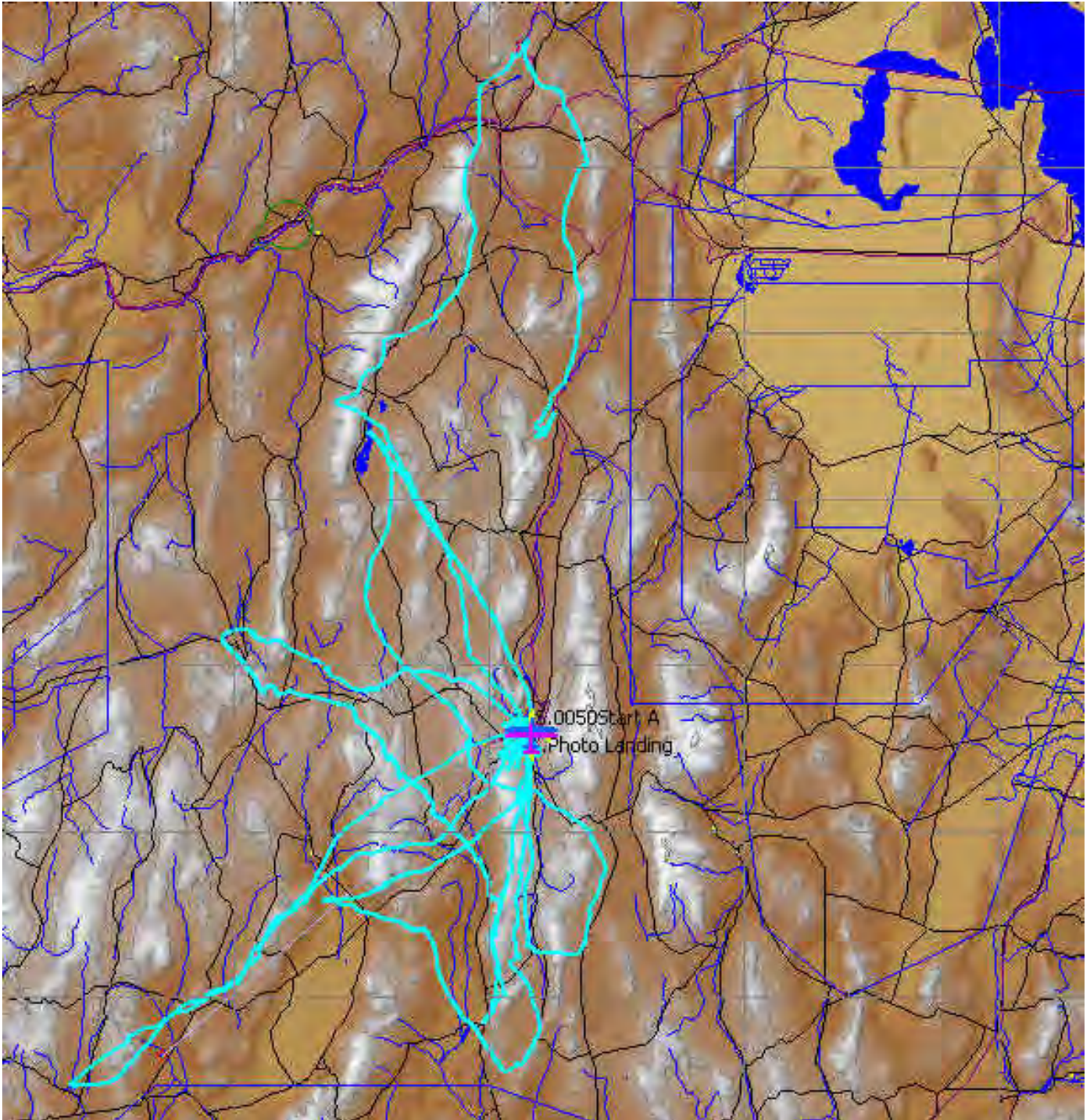
low meaning that all contestants had to dig out of Ely before they could get going – so high speeds were not achieved by a high proportion of final glide in the flights. Sadly, the low turnout meant that the sports class was not an official class however the Air Force academy pilots had a great time competing amongst themselves and showed dramatic improvement over the contest (some of the cadets all instructor rated – had less than 30hrs x-c time logged. A very impressive showing by these talented individuals. By combining Standard and 15m classes into 15m we were able to have a good contest.

What of the 15m contestants? A very collegial field of 6 pilots including your editor, with Chris Ashburn, a fellow Brit, making the visit from San Diego and Bob Carl (777 captain) hauling in from Colorado to sample the conditions at Ely. The other region 11 pilots were Rolf, Jim and Tom Hubbard. As we were flying a combined Std/15m class, we used the new std class 2% handicap allowed in Regional classes this year and I feel it worked quite well – in the strong lift –high speed conditions of the high desert the Std ships are definitely at a slight disadvantage. Chris certainly made me work hard for 1st place.

Sincere thanks for the good folks at Ely who put on such a friendly contest for us. We had 3 generations of active pilots at the contest (Carl Herold, who is old enough to be my Dad, and the cadets who were young enough to be my kids) Hannes did a great job as an ‘old school’ CD who believes in making pilots work for their task speeds by digging their way out of Ely before proceeding on course line, though he did make plentiful use of the TAT option in the changeable weather to provide further tests for the pilots.

Region 11 - 2006 Ely, NV Cumulative Summary 15 Meter Class Class

							Jun 30, 06	Jun 29, 06	Jun 28, 06	Jun 27, 06	Jun 26,				
Cumulative Score															
Rank	Points	ID	SSA#	Name	Glider	Rank	Points	Rank	Points	Rank	Points	Rank	Points	Rank	Pts
1	4133	2T	860414	Deane, Peter	LS-8A	1	1000	1	900	1	400	3	900	1	933
2	3942	C	914167	Ashburn, Chris	LAK-17A	2	889	2	869	4	320	1	1000	3	864
3	2792	7U	935323	Carl, bob	Ventus 2A	4	832	5	0	2	346	5	792	4	822
4	2588	PE	120049	Peterson, Rolf	ASW-20	5	819	3	218	4	320	2	909	5	322
5	2416	VN	915619	Hubbard, Thomas	Discus 2B	3	875	4	209	6	302	4	826	6	204
6	1988	5K	904141	Alton, Jim	LAK-17A	6	0	5	0	3	328	6	779	2	881



An overlay of the tasks flown from Ely by 2T

These traces show the flights I made on the contest days at the Regionals – You can see some of the wide detours that were required to make it round on the rapidly cycling overdevelopment days. The route to the north was our mass landout day when we all went too far into the turn area expecting to be able to find a way through the overdevelopment for our return. Its wild country out there but we were all able to find good landing sites. The fastest day, day 5, was the course to the southwest. This was an incredible day (winning speed was mid 90's mph!) and truthfully we could have gone much further though the conditions were difficult to call as the air was so unstable. It was my first time flying at Ely and it is not for the feint-hearted – the terrain is intimidating, the lift and sink are extreme, the distances between mountain ranges are large, and the weather is powerful and can change very quickly.

Air Sailing Sports Class Contest Results

JJ Sinclair is shown landing his Genesis II on runway 21L at Air Sailing (we land on the dirt, folks). He came in third for day five (last day) of the Air Sailing Sports Class contest. After winning day one, JJ never gave up the cumulative lead. The daily winner was Russell Holtz with 800 points in his Vega. As you can see, the day was devalued because not all pilots finished the course.

It was a tough one on a blue day. It was a Turn Area Task. The first turn point was Gerlach, followed by Tiger, Flanigan, and Air Sailing for 201.84 miles.

Oh yes, Russell also won day four on Thursday. There were no relights during the contest. Cumulative rankings at the end of the contest:

JJ Sinclair	4645	Genesis II
Russell Holtz	4559	Vega
Louis McDonald	4530	Ventus B
Tim Taylor	4112	Ventus B
Matt Herron (father & son)	3648	LS-4
Hal Chouinard	3568	ASW-27
Doug Gray	3520	DG-300
David Prather	3513	ASW-15
Rolf Peterson	3286	ASW-20
John Downing	3143	LS-8
Shannon Madsen	2928	G-102
Roger Harris	2882	Ventus B



JJ landing at the end of the AirSailing contest

Go Flying!

Trevor Atkins, Piako Gliding Club

(An article written for Gliding Kiwi, New Zealand)

One of my favorite farewells to a fellow pilot is: "See you at the Nationals"! It is a phrase filled with camaraderie, the hope of some great flying, knowing that some fun times will be had, and that enough stories will eventuate to fill the winter months while waiting for the next contest season!

The Best Flying Opportunities of the Year

Did you know that contests are actually a front?

When else are you given a license by your family to simply "go fly". When else are you encouraged to push the stick forward, and don't worry, "if you land out we'll come pick you up". Where else do you get to saunter into a briefing every morning and have the weather laid on, a carefully thought out task prepared for you, and that day's after-flying social activities detailed?

Don't get me wrong, for those wanting intense competition, you will find it at a gliding contest. But for those wanting a great flying holiday – at club rates – this is absolutely the way to do it!

Great Myths About Contests

1. ***"I need to bring a retrieve crew"***
Nope. Though you do need to be willing to pick up fellow contest pilots on some days to help share the load (actually not a bad way to see a bit of new countryside at someone else's expense!).
2. ***"I don't have enough time to fly a full contest"***
Did you know that it is the **glider** that is entered in a contest? There are lots of examples where 2 or 3 pilots enter a glider and then divvy up who flies which days. We see this done a lot with club owned single and twin gliders.
3. ***"I am not a good enough pilot to win"***
Errrrr, so what?! There can only be one winner, and most of us know from day 1 that we are not the one! But that does not reduce the absolute thrill of calling final glide after a great day's outing, the joy of the occasional good day placing, and the fun rivalries that develop further down the rankings list.
4. ***"I can't fly that far"***
One of the many exciting things about your first couple of contests is that almost every day you come home having achieved a personal best. And even better, everyone around you

understands the importance of that and celebrates with you! Flying at a contest really does make you a better pilot - safely.



Formation flight out of Lovelock (P.Kelly)

Micro-burst at Truckee, 6-24-06

I'd heard about micro-bursts for years, but never really appreciated their full potential until I experienced one up close and personal at Truckee, last Saturday evening. It'd been a good day; YD, L6 and I ran down south to the Owens Valley. At 4:00 PM, I heard a call that thunderstorms were forming from Mammoth Lakes all the way to Reno and decided that Bishop was far

enough for me and started back home. I got a good climb east of Mammoth and then headed for some dark CU's east of Bridgeport. Thought I'd screwed up when I found nothing on Potato Peak, but finally got a slow climb under that black stuff to 16ish south of Sweetwater. Then to some CU's near Yerington for a climb to 17.5. The Western horizon was all black from Seagull to Stead with a curtain of virga hanging over Truckee. Decided to drive in there and see what happened and was pleasantly surprised to find 2-knot lift all the way to Slide Mountain.

As I dumped my water and let down, I knew my landing was going to be exciting. I was experiencing some of the worst turbulence I have ever seen. With maps flying around the cockpit, I hunkered down and tightened up all my belts. At times it was all I could do to keep the wings level and the airspeed around 65 knots. AWOS couldn't make up its mind about the wind, first I got 180 @ 18, gusts to 29, then 230 @ 19, Gusts to 30. What to do? What could I do? Hadn't seen any real lift, just extreme turbulence, so landing wasn't really an option, it was more an inevitability. I trimmed her for 70 knots and turned down-wind with 1100 AGL. Suddenly I started dropping like a stone; all variors pegged full down. The trees in the campground were rushing up at an alarming rate as I remembered Fred Frauens had crashed his Libelle there trying to land in a micro-burst. I took an immediate 90 degree cut for the runway, but the sink was relentless. At one point I thought I would hit the trees just short of the glider tie-downs, but the down-burst must have subsided as all that air came crashing into the ground. Anyway, I cleared the trees and approached the runway a good 60 degrees off runway heading and about a wingspan above the ground. Just then my left wing went down hard, I needed to turn left to line up with the runway, but not that steep. Full right aileron for a moment got my left wing back up to about 45 degrees. Full left rudder and I found myself lined up perfectly with 19. One good pull and I touched down hard, pulled the spoilers out for the first time and even made the turn-off.

I'm told my wings were flapping like a bird as I came over the trees and my left wing tip missed the sagebrush by about 3 feet. The guys & gals at Truckee think I'm some kind of a stick. They should have checked my shorts! I called L6 and told him to expect severe down in the pattern and extreme turbulence on final, recommending he hold his altitude and plunk it down anywhere on 19. He did just that and didn't scare the squirrels in the top of those pine-trees. I guess that's what I learned, If there's a thunderstorm over the field, keep most of your pattern altitude until over the runway, then descend wings-level using full spoilers.

JJ Sinclair



A micro-burst showing the telltale dust cloud and associated miniature gust front.

INTO THE STRATOSPHERE WITHOUT AN ENGINE

New world glider altitude record set by Fossett and Enevoldson in Argentina - 50,671 feet (15,447 m) achieved by 'Perlan' - the first ever glider flight into the earth's stratosphere
Previous record shattered by 1,662 ft (507m)

August 30, 2006 - El Calafate, Argentina:

Wearing NASA spacesuits and flying along the crest of the Andes, pilot Steve Fossett (USA b. 1944) and co-pilot Einar Enevoldson (USA b. 1932) took their 'Perlan' high performance research glider on the world's first stratospheric glider flight yesterday - surfing the Andean 'mountain wave' to a height of 50,699 feet (15,453 m) * - while breaking the previous record by 1,662 ft (507m) . The old record 49,009 ft (14,940 m) by Robert Harris was set in 1986 in California.

It was a victory for careful weather planning, precision flying, experience and teamwork. After a tow to 13,000 ft on Tuesday, the pair began their search for the lift required to achieve their goal. Capitalizing on the 'mountain wave' phenomena of high altitude updrafts

and their own extensive gliding experience (Fossett has set 10 absolute world glider records for speed and distance while former NASA research pilot Enevoldson has been flying gliders since 1949), the pair had only their pressure suits, helmets, foot heaters and hand muffs to ward off the cold inside the unpressurized tandem cockpit as outside temperatures fell to as low as -57 degrees C.



Some 4-1/2 hours into the flight, the 72 foot wingspan Perlan glider (based on a German-built DG-505 high-performance sport glider but extensively modified)

finally achieved the record altitudes first targeted by the project at its conception 7 years ago, with first flights in New Zealand taking place in 2002.

Steve Fossett: ***"This record is special. We have made attempts in New Zealand, USA and Argentina over a period of 5 years - so this is a hard won success."***

During the course of the flight (primarily within a 60 mile radius of El Calafate near the border of Argentina and Chile), the American pair found themselves flying well above commercial air traffic - a fact received with bemusement by pilots of passenger jets under the same air traffic control.

Steve Fossett recalled: ***"I couldn't understand the Chilean controller describing us in Spanish to the airline pilot - but I understood the answer by the pilot: 'Wow'."***

The Perlan Project was initiated by Fossett, best known for his Around the World records by sailboat, balloon and solo airplane, and project operations director and chief engineer Enevoldson in conjunction with NASA's Dryden Flight Research Center at Edwards Air Force Base. Their objective was to prove the possibility to achieve un-powered flight to tremendous altitude by literally 'surfing' from one mountain wave to another - to increasingly greater height. Taking advantage of these wave patterns while maintaining control in ever-thinner air has proven a big challenge - with success finally coming in this, the team's 5th season of attempts on three continents. The combination of meaningful meteorological and aerodynamic research manifested itself in NASA's supply of the space suits - similar to those worn by astronauts and pilots of ultra-high-performance jet reconnaissance aircraft.

Minden Airport Action Committee Meeting

Here is a brief report on the Minden AAC meeting (Sept 6th) combined by me from notes by Jim Herd and Fred LaSor who attended.

1. Jim Braswell (Airport mgr) is concerned that capital money from the FAA is likely to be severely curtailed at KMEV for the next few years. He fears most of the FAA money allocated to Nevada will go to Carson City airport for a major facelift and runway re-alignment. They will spend about \$24M over 5 years to rotate their runway 7 degrees.

(The exact source of the funds for Carson City renovation project is not completely clear at this point – whether it comes from AIP funds or from elsewhere, this potentially affecting funds available for the master plan and gliding activities infrastructure at KMEV)



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- Camp in the pine trees at the Airport
- Shower, bunk room golf carts, tie-downs
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2. Capital money for next year at KMEV will be for finishing the burying of power lines at the departure end of runway 30. Plus funding for the new Airport Master Plan.

3. One capital item that was not discussed this evening, but is on the agenda for the Commissioner' s meeting tomorrow, is a project to "repair" taxiway Bravo.

4. Future projected capital projects (2008 to 2012) include ramp, taxiway, and parking lot repairs, Super AWOS, telephone system to make the gates work, buying land for additional RPZ, East side tie down ramp, runway 21.

(There is some conjecture that the repair to the taxiway is aimed at enabling a 100,000lb aircraft capability at Minden. The newly paved runway is now rated at 100,000lb, up from 50,000lb, according to Jim Herd.)

5. New restrictive rules for parking around T hangars. These were passed on to the County Commissioners .

6. Skydiving at KMEV – no information, just a statement that discussions continue. (Basically, we are waiting for proposed operations rules from the skydivers, viewing of which has been promised to Fred LaSor)

7. Runway 21 (crosswind runway for gliders) – Jim Braswell says the FAA will not approve re-opening of either 21 or 21 taxiway because they end in an active runway and because they are not long enough. (Fred LaSor has talked to Braswell about this before and after last night's meeting and will try to come up with a creative alternative that will get us a 21)

8. Next airport safety meeting will be October 3 or 10.

Alternative Air to Air Communication frequencies

(A useful note from Ken Ward about alternative 'chat' frequencies – but please note - Be aware of when it is important to be on frequencies where you need to hear

the communications of ATC and/or other pilots flying in your vicinity, and not forget you're on a chat frequency . Ed)

In the current AIM, section 4-1-11, table 4-1-3, you'll find other frequencies that can legally be used. For air-to-air communication, you can legally use 122.75 and/or 122.85; I gave a call to AOPA just now to confirm this. At a recent FAA Safety Seminar these two frequencies were suggested as being available to use for "Hey Marc! Where'd you find that thermal?!"

Please don't use non-designated frequencies or made-up frequencies. Andrew McFall told me that he was able to get the Reno office to authorize short term use of custom frequencies for his XC classes, so as to keep them off .3/.5, which would be a neat procedure for the SSA to negotiate with the FAA for contests.

Best regards, Ken Ward



Sunset at Ely, Region 11 2006

Land out at Topaz International

(Darryl Ramm)

I thought I'd report on a landing I made there. (Topaz international is a very visible dirt strip in the north end of the Topaz Valley just south of the Pine Nuts and is a key landing site if you're too low to get back into the Carson Valley from the south. It's official name is Fly-in Mouse Ranch ..Ed)

I was following a couple of gliders down towards Patterson. I wasted time on the Pine Nuts and ended up behind the other gliders, I was pushing trying to catch up and I also think the winds shifted to the north east before I could connect to the convergence lines near Patterson. I was on the Desert Creek ridge running to Patterson and nothing was working for me. I ended up losing glide to Rosachi and while working back towards Bald Peak in vain hope of a climb and ended up only with Topaz in glide, which I was kicking myself for allowing to happen. In hindsight also could have looked at Desert Creek, but I know nothing about this except it is marked on the sectional. Anybody ever land there?

The landing at Topaz not very elegant but I managed to air retrieve out of there with Mike from Soar Truckee. BTW Soar Minden will not tow out of Topaz. I was flying my 15m wingspan glider; Topaz would be ugly in a 20m ship like 1CH.

I had time to do some orbits over the strip to check out both runways. There is a tattered windsock near the runway intersection. With a 10-15knot north east wind blowing I decided to land on the shorter NE/SW strip which was aligned directly into wind and running up hill. I was thinking with both runways being narrow why risk any crosswind at all. About the first half of this runway is way too narrow, there is a fence or hedge or burm or something (sorry I never walked back to check out what it is) running along it's northern side but from where it crosses the main runway there are no significant obstructions so I decided to land on that end of the runway - which turned out not to be a good choice as I found on rollout. Of course it felt narrower the lower I got but the real problem was the north east end of this runway looks like firm gravel but has a few patches of loose sand amongst the gravel which made controlling the glider after landing difficult and the glider ended up off centerline a little and clipping a sagebrush and ground looped. I had to dig the main wheel out of one of the sandy patches which it had sunk up to it's axle in. I was going pretty slowly when it ground looped and there was no real damage to the glider. Even without the sand patches keeping both wings clear of sage brush on this runway is going to be tough.

Things would have been better had I put up with the cross wind and landed on the longer north/south strip. The gravel surface on this strip is in good condition, I walked the central part we were going to use for air

retrieve and it is firm gravel. The strip runs uphill to the north, about half way along the strip is the steepest part and it is wider there as well but if you roll beyond that there is a shed and machinery very close (~10 feet?!) to the west edge of the main runway. The steep part is going to help stop you pretty quickly if you touch down before it. It also shouldn't be a factor but there are power lines running to the house and the shed they run along the north side of the NW/SE facing runway. So if there is another visit to Topaz in future I'll be using the main runway. (Today I happily flew past Topaz at 16k feet)

The owner who lives in the house next to the strip was very friendly; he offered use of his telephone, refreshments etc. and helped out by running a wing for me. He is (was?) a power pilot and has an old Mooney in a shed on the strip. He used to work in the Bay Area for Lockheed Martin on the space shuttle.

The air retrieve was at the limits of what I'm comfortable with, with a narrow runway, downhill departure with a quartering tail wind and lots of dust. I aligned the glider to compensate for weather cocking and off centerline just slightly to the windward side of the runway. I can't say I enjoyed towing down a narrow strip with a cross wind in dust induced IFR (I Follow Rope). I was expecting a little less dust than I got, I'm glad I've had practice for this at Panoche and Avenal.

Memorable Avenal (David Greenhill)

(Ed's note – David and I had an excellent Memorial weekend at Avenal this year with some unusual flights – we thought you might like to hear how good it really was! Avenal is an excellent, friendly, glider only site – another jewel in our regional soaring crown)

Tues May 23rd.... "Where do you want to go to ? Avenal ? At the end of May? To the home of Mario's land out camp? You must be joking! What did you say, a cold front is passing through according to the forecast? Let me check the weather and I'll get back to you." So went the conversation when Peter Deane suggested we take a trip to Avenal for Memorial Day weekend.

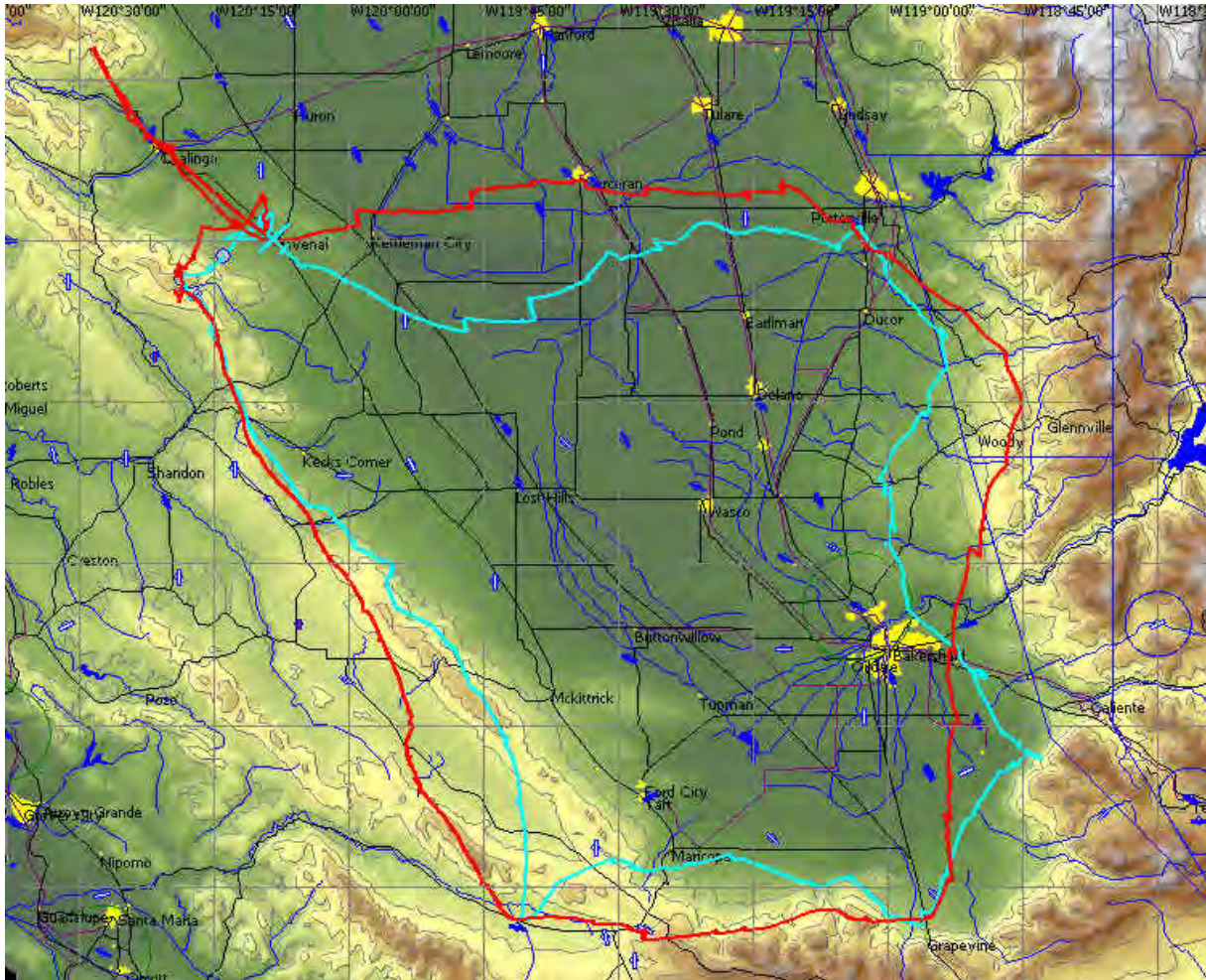
Friday afternoon in Sunnyvale the promised cold front had passed by heading south. It was marked by a band of cloud but no rain. There was clear unstable air behind. Friday night with my Discus2 in tow we were on the road to Avenal against my better judgment. I'd never had any particularly long flights from Avenal. Previous experiences had been chasing dust devils in the central valleys searing heat. My memories of Avenal were mainly of hot sweaty flights trying to dodge land outs. However this weekend promised to be something different.

There's something to be said for a glider only field like Avenal, Peter, Bruce Roberts and I arrive late, setting up

camp next to glider trailers, on the side of the runway. No one else is around and the airfield is completely dark and peaceful. It's great to have everything right there ready for takeoff.

Saturday morning Mario shows up and talks of previous similar days of touring the Mountains bordering the

South end of the Central Valley. We settle on New Cuyama and Grapevine as the first two turn points. There's no lines for tows & I have only a few yards to push the glider into line. It's nice to take a short tow straight to a thermal and climb up. No long mountain tow required.



Saturday's tour of the southern central valley. The return crossing was very blue.

From there we work west into the hills. Peter (2T) and I (16) start close together from Black Mountain. The first 20 miles are a blast dolphining under cloud streets at 6000-7000'. Half way to the first turn we're faced with a choice - stick with better clouds running down the Central Valley toward Taft or head straight on course. The clouds are significantly east of the course line is. The course line heads through the California Valley. Peter takes the clouds and I opt for the direct route. It's a struggle for me across the California valley. I have the Eagles playing in my head " Welcome to the Hotel California Such a lovely PlaceYou can check out any time you like, But you can never leave",

The normally bone dry Soda Lake has turquoise water in its center. Very pretty, but not much good for thermals. The heavy rainfall this spring had obviously had an

impact even here. I work a series of weak thermals to get me to the mountains between the California and New

Cuyama valleys. This range is a spectacularly rocky outcrop between the two valleys. There is obviously bluer air in the New Cuyama Valley. I get high over the mountains to go into the turn point. Peter's route works out to be faster and turns a few minutes ahead of me.

On the second leg I head for the "Funky Jog" a turn point we named for a twist in the road that goes from the California Valley up the side of the 8840' Mt Pinos. I find a strong climb and head for Grapevine. This is a turn at the southern end of the central valley where I-5 cuts through the mountains to L.A. I see 2T for the first time in an hour or so, he's just a head of me. He leaves the climb just as I arrive. Nothing much is left - he's used it all up ! So I head up the central valley's East side determined to catch him up. I opt for a course line along

the foothills of the Sierra. I'd often seen a convergence line forecast here by the Dr Jack's blip maps. Sure enough there is strong lift in the foothills east of Bakersfield. I'm tempted for a while to just run as far as possible up the Sierra's, but that would be a one way ticket. After some discussion we settle on Porterville as the next turn. The wind is noticeably stronger from the NW, but progress is good under cloud streets.

I make the mistake of flying on the downwind side of pk. 4823' between Bakersfield and Potterville. I know it's a mistake but do it anyway and get hammered in the sink and turbulence for stupidity. On the up wind side I'm rewarded by a couple of strong thermals back to cloud base at 7000' and carry on to the turn point. The cloud street has helped me jump 10 minutes ahead of 2T who stayed in the central valley.

After the turn we're faced with a large blue hole the whole width of the central valley. I set off in trepidation, but find to my relief that there are unmarked 3kt thermals to be had. However the wind is blowing 18kts from the NW so each climb has me going backwards. Still progress is made.

2T is having a similar experience on his course line a few miles south of me. Interestingly comparing traces after the flight our climbs line up with each other. Showing strong evidence of blue streeting. Unfortunately this is across our direction of travel so doesn't help. In the middle of the central valley there is more irrigation and the thermals are noticeably weaker. I begin to think this is going to end as a land out a few miles from Avenal. Still clouds can be seen 20 miles or so further on so I keep with the struggle. I eventually make it to a decaying looking cloud, but am rewarded with a welcome 4.5kt climb.

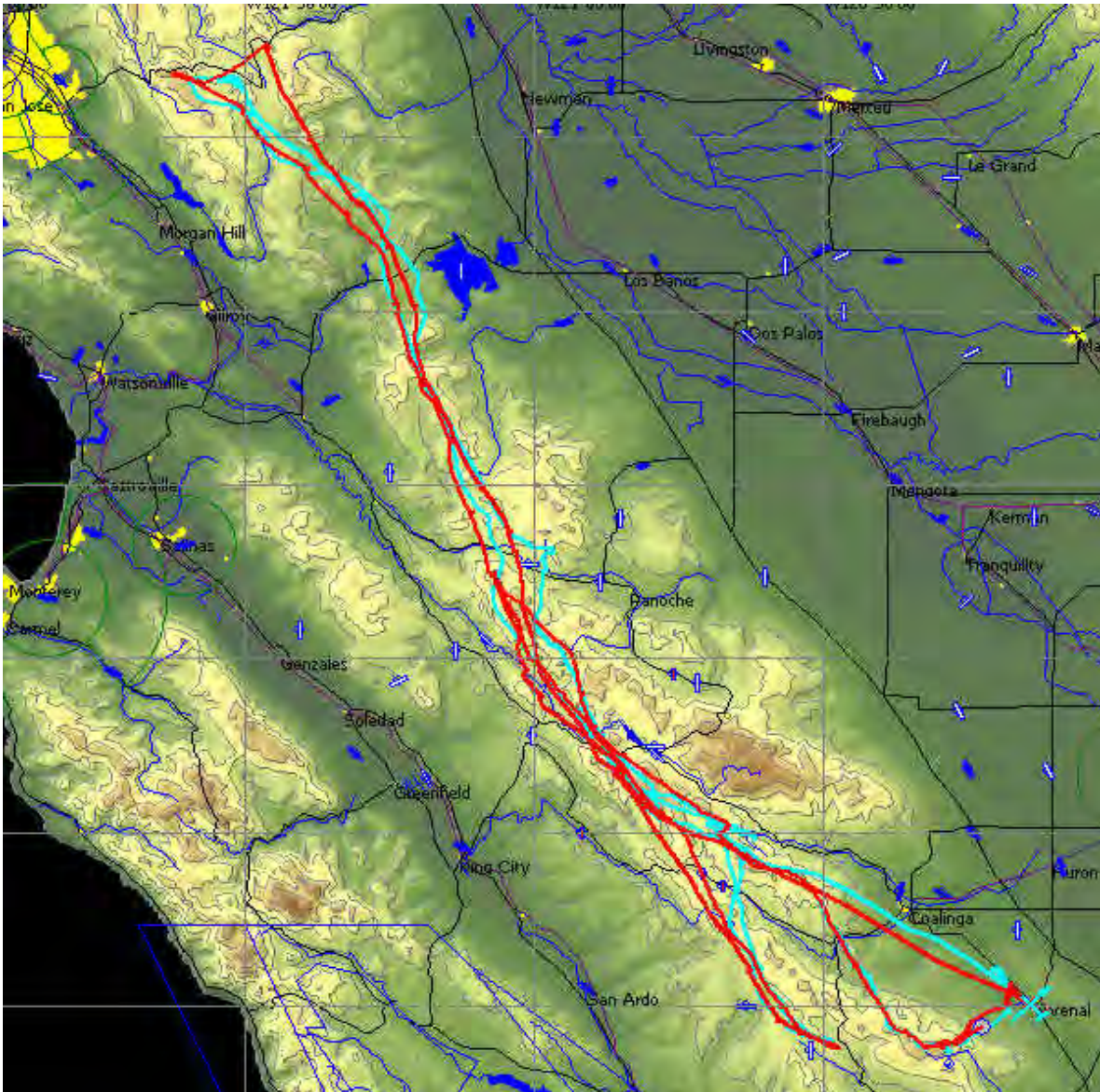
Peter is struggling too. He took a more southerly route to approach Avenal from the south but the lift didn't work so well for him. He's on marginal final glide to Avenal. I get to Avenal and decide to head north. Conditions really improve and soon I'm up over Coalinga at 8000'. I haven't heard from 2T for a while so am wondering what has happened to him. I turn north from Coalinga and burn off some altitude then head back to Avenal. As I pull up over the airfield I see where he is. Glider and trailer are just leaving the field south of the field. He was short of a few feet of altitude against the stronger head wind than expected and rather than risking hitting the airfield fence had set it down short. A smart decision. Interestingly, the field grass looked about 2-3 ft tall from the flight line prior to take off but it turned out to be uncut

and full of 6 ft high weeds! Luckily no damage is done. It's quite a sight to see from the air with the truck and trailer cutting a swath through the weeds. We'd both had a great day with a good 500km flight.

Sunday

The forecast is still good. Over breakfast at Perko's in Coalinga we decide to make it easier on ourselves. The order of the day is to clock up miles by running up and down the convergence lines towards Hollister.

We head off not much above Black Mountain and cross to Center Peak NW of Coalinga. It's blue, but we can already see good clouds ahead. We reach the clouds, but nothing strong is found. After not getting much from the first 2 clouds I settle for a mediocre climb. 2T pushes ahead expecting the strong one but never finds it and has to double back headed toward Coalinga. He eventually finds a good climb, but it's put him 15 minutes or so behind me. The run up past Hernandez shows a clearly developing convergence that continues even north of the Panoche pass. The clouds west of me are 1000' lower, but that looks like it is the main convergence line forming. Peter takes that route and it helps him catch some distance up. The clouds keep heading north, so we decide to see if we can make it to Mt Hamilton. Despite many flights from Hollister I'd never been able to get there before. Conditions are good and I fly along with some pilots from Hollister for a while. There's a mass of cumulus clouds over Mt Hamilton, but it's seriously over developed. I tiptoe to the turn. It's spectacular to see the telescope towers on the mountain with a view out across the whole of the Bay Area. However I'm not particularly high so don't have time for sight seeing. I am low for a direct return to Pacheco Pass and there isn't much lift and is over unlandable terrain. So instead I head 10 miles directly east to get to better looking clouds. I cross over an interesting strip just East of Mt Hamilton. That looks like a fun place to fly from. It's also a welcome alternative if the clouds ahead don't work. I'm just getting concerned about altitude when I find a good one back to cloud base. 2T has been racing to catch up. He's almost made it, but gets low and ends up grinding around low over the strip I'd just seen. It's always interesting, there's a fine line between pushing on for the good climb & pushing too hard and getting low. Once low you have to take what ever you get for a climb & that can be a slow grind. I also see another glider really low over tiger country, out of range of any decent landing sites. I think it's 2T for a while, but it turns out he's off to the West so I've no idea who it is. I am glad not to be down there.



Sundays flight from Avenal to San Jose and points along the Diablo's

Heading back South the best line of clouds is slightly off to the East of course line over the edge of the central valley. I follow a line that eventually joins up with those clouds over Pacheco Pass. It's an uneventful flight from here South. I run until the clouds give out at Pine Canyon. I get the highest climb of the day to almost 9000'. I suspect it's the drier air allowing a higher cloud base. I decide to take another run up and down the clouds West of Hernandez. There is distinct signs of the day shutting down. The climbs are now only about 3kt. However I don't have any difficulty getting up high at the last cloud. From there it's a 10 mile glide North in smooth air to Chemise Look Out. This is the last high peak short of the Panoche Pass. I have to take weaker climbs heading back South. I can see wind blowing in from the Monterey Bay making waves on the ponds in the valley. The marine air is blowing out the good lift. I don't get a strong climb until I'm back abeam Hernandez. 4kts takes me back to 8000' cloud base. 2T has already

turned for home, having seen the weakening conditions ahead. He's on final glide. I need one last climb to get me back to Avenal. I glide over to Center Peak. It's covered in a big area of spread out. I bump along looking for the climb. I'm almost giving up hope of finding the climb and am about to set off on a marginal final glide for Avenal. Eventually just as I reach the sunlight on the South end of the ridge, I find the climb I need, back to 6400'. Then it's a fast glide back into Avenal for 584km. This makes it an 1100km weekend for me. Not bad certainly the best I've ever had from Avenal.

Thanks very much to the people at Avenal. Particularly to Loyal, the tow pilot. This is a great site to fly from and I enjoyed it very much. With the quality of soaring forecast we get from Dr Jack it's fairly easy to predict when the good conditions will be there and plan a visit. I'd recommend it. Traces are shown here and are available from the OLC.

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The Door Is Closing

(A Requiem for a Season, by Peter Beecher)

(Ed's note – I included this delightful piece by Peter at the risk of a hail of complaint from JJ for including too many syllables in the newsletter – However I thought it was worth the risk....What do you think??)

The Door is closing. This is a really big door; it deserves a capital "D". Even "big" does not describe or give justice to the size of this door...its perimeter is immeasurable, and its other dimensions are incalculable. One thing is certain, after opening wide to the delight and excitement of humankind, it begins to close so weightlessly and ever so imperceptibly at first that no one is even aware of this shift of attitude. But gradually, there begins to be a trace of change, at first maybe only perceptible to the wizened and those whose acumen and powers of discernment have been honed in solitude and developed with time. And somewhat thereafter, it isn't so long before others, less sensitive and lacking the sapience of the few, begin to feel this metamorphosis. The Door is closing.

The Door is a divide. On one side of the Door there is bright light, life giving light, so bright and so majestic that it is revered and cherished beyond the limits of adoration. On the other side is darkness, deep darkness,

dismal darkness, the darkness that is cold and drenched in despair and futility. But for as long as the Door is open, the dank darkness is held at bay and its powers of morbidity arrested. But as the Door closes, the joyousness that is light and its accompanying warmth, gives steadily away to duskiness and deep murkiness.

Now it is unmistakable...the previously unmeasured and unpunctuated movement gains momentum. There is no doubt now... the Door continues to close. Perhaps because the Door is not yet even half closed, or because of some kind of denial mechanism, this change does not instill fear or trepidation in those that perceive it. But it is closing, and soon, there is an uneasy feeling, a feeling of constriction, and just as the Door began to creep unnoticed at first and only so gradually began to reveal movement, so too this early inkling of foreboding begins to emerge with an almost shadowy pall. Now the Door is getting even bigger, heavier, and more ominous.

It isn't long from now what is to become...it will be getting darker, and as the choking shadows grow long they begin to reach out and consume the brightness and sap the color from life. There is a growing gloom. It isn't long now before the sensation of dread begins to grip at the heart. Soon it is clear that the cold and darkly depressing realm of dreariness and hopelessness is upon us, closing down our lives and desire to live.

Melancholy and wretchedness abound, and a feeling of death and decay permeates the atmosphere. The Door finally closes, its unfathomably burdensome weight is now fully realized, but... but...just as it began to imperceptibly close, the Door begins to imperceptibly open.

My best in friendship along with my warmest regards this mid-summer. And as some of you may recall from a previous exhortation, I wish for you to bask in the gloriousness that is sunshine, to as Waldo Emerson wrote, "live in the sunshine, swim the sea, drink the wild air's salubrity", and not let go unused each precious moment of resplendent brilliance that is uplifting daylight.

GAVIN WILLS AT TRUCKEE

A Recap of Gavin Wills Talk at Soar Truckee (Jim Alton)

Glider Pilots & visitors at Soar Truckee had the pleasure of a presentation from Gavin Wills of [Glide Omarama](#) on

soaring in New Zealand, and previews of an especially entertaining video, "[Gladiators of the Sky](#)" from the January 2006 Soaring Grand Prix in New Zealand. Gavin was supported by two more legendary Kiwi's from Glide Omarama, G. Dale and Lemmy Tanner.

Gavin recounted the history of soaring at Omarama, noting how years ago, preparations for hosting the Worlds competition started the transformation of a small club operation into a world class center for soaring excellence and cross country training. Film from the New Zealand Grand Prix thrilled pilots and spouses alike. The 2006 Grand Prix used an unprecedented amount of technology to bring the thrill of soaring back to the wives and spectators, with real time GPS data being used to track the progress of the competitors and live footage from helicopter mounted cameras beamed back to a giant outdoor TV screen. The video also showed great pilots eye footage from cockpit mounted cameras, of ridge soaring New Zealand's spectacular mountains.



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Gavin's success winning the [2005 US Sports Class Nationals](#) in Parowan UT shows that good pilots are good pilots no matter where they fly. But we enjoyed comparing the differences in rules & regulations for soaring between the US and New Zealand. While New Zealand has controlled airspace in the approach and departure routes to its large airports, outside that space there is no ceiling to the controlled space, like we have at 18,000 ft in the US. This is a benefit with wave conditions New Zealand often experiences. In the "[Roaring Forties](#)" latitude, with multiple upwind mountain ranges, Omarama is frequently blessed with great wave soaring. Being able to go above 18,000' makes

cross country wave flying a bit easier. The regulation of pilots in New Zealand is quite a bit different than in the US. All glider pilots in New Zealand are required to join a gliding club and the clubs chief instructor enforces safe & responsible behavior amongst pilots in his club.

We had a lively discussion of the possibility of landing in water, a subject of much interest to the Truckee pilots who regularly make long glides over the Lake Tahoe bowl, with no where else to land should they be too low to clear Brockway pass at the northwest end of the lake. Though no one present had actually performed a water landing,

consensus was it should be made with the landing gear down, if practical – the wheel brake on, and the touchdown should be as slow speed, but not a full stall. (Though prudence dictates you follow your sailplane manufacturer's recommendations for water landings.) Gavin closed the night with a strong recommendation that Truckee/Minden/Air Sailing area pilots ought to establish as center of soaring excellence that can support both training and contests. One of the key requirements for this is establishing good relations with the other pilots and air traffic control personnel we share the airspace with.

PASCO SCHOLARSHIP FUND

(Hans Van Weersch)

One of the purposes of the Pacific Soaring Council is to stimulate youth to enter the great sport of soaring. A long time ago a Scholarship Fund was established for this purpose.

In the recent past we have not been utilizing the assets in this scholarship fund for mentioned purpose. Only 2 new pilots filed an application in the past 3 years.

The rules for an application are simple:



- The standard contribution is US\$250 per applicant. This should cover the examination fee.
- The new pilot should be attending school for more than 20 hours per week at the time of the examination.
- The request should be endorsed by the examiner.
- The new pilot is obliged to write up his experience of obtaining a glider license for publication in the next West Wind.
- The new pilot should have passed the final examination not more than 2 months ago at the time of the request.

A maximum of 4 scholarships total are available per calendar year (on a first come first serve basis).

If you are a student pilot, talk to your instructor or examiner about this opportunity!

If you are an instructor or an examiner, please bring forward your candidates!

If you would like to make a contribution to the scholarship fund, please contact the treasurer.

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Contact Darryl Ramm (this year's organizer) with questions -
darryl_ramm@yahoo.com

See: www.pacificsoaring.org/awards/sawyer.html for details!!

See OLC: www.onlinecontest.org

Also see www.abqsoaring.org/misc_files/USA-OLCTutorial.pdf

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Peter Deane,
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